



Arriving in Leipzig in 2022

Report on the measures and offers in Leipzig for the support and reception of people seeking protection in the wake of the Russian war against Ukraine, a war of aggression that is in violation of international law. Focus: The measures taken by the Leipzig city administration



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Please note

Content related to civil society, the commitment of the people of Leipzig and the numerous associations and initiatives in the reporting period represent the views of the staff of the city of Leipzig and the Job Centre as well as media reports. The quotes and media reports are labelled as such.

Non-official translation. The official document is the German language version.

A war against humanity

On 24 February 2022, the city of Leipzig raised the flag of Ukraine in front of New City Hall, which continues to fly there in a show of Leipzig's solidarity with Ukraine. After Russia's attack on Ukraine, an attack in violation of international law, the vast majority of Leipzig's city council factions as well as Leipzig's Youth Parliament immediately passed a joint resolution declaring their full solidarity with Ukraine and Leipzig's oldest twin city, the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

Leipzig's urban community also responded immediately: Private individuals drove to the Polish border to welcome refugees from Ukraine or put Ukrainians up in their homes in Leipzig. Associations and initiatives created new offers and initiatives in aid of Ukraine. The "Städtepartnerschaftsverein Ukraine Kontakt e. V." twinning association set up a donation account and continues to coordinate numerous humanitarian projects in support of Ukraine and Leipzig's twin city of Kyiv in these difficult times.

The city of Leipzig recognised this extraordinary civic commitment with special awards for the newly founded aid associations "Leipzig helps Ukraine e. V." and "Humanitäre Hilfe Ukraine e. V.".

The city of Leipzig sees the attack on Ukraine as an attack on all of us. An attack on the values of democracy and on peace in Europe. This clear position and the solidarity with the people of Ukraine attracted a lot of attention, with the result that almost 12,000 people from Ukraine sought refuge in Leipzig, and **some 10,000 people remained here.**

The main focus lay of course on practical support for the people seeking protection, such as the help and travel centre at the main railway station, services arranged in the new Arrival Centre, as well as organising places in available houses, day-care centres, schools and language courses as well as jobs. Beyond that, showing solidarity – as through raising a flag – is also of vital importance, as it does not only give strength to the people in Ukraine, but

Image 1 The Ukrainian flag flies in front of the New City Hall



clearly shows to all Ukrainians that the city stands by them and that they are not alone in their fight for freedom.

Resources and administration

The city's measures for dealing with the consequences of Russia's illegitimate military attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and of the war that has been waged on the Ukrainian territory ever since, are coordinated by the Ukraine task force ("Koordinierungsstab Ukraine"). The unit, which was set up by the mayor on 1 March 2022, is headed by the deputy mayor for general services.

By resolution of the council meeting on 15 March 2022, the mayor was granted approval for unbudgeted expenses totalling 9 million euros in accordance with Section 79 (1) of the Saxon municipal code (SächsGemO). By decision of 19 May 2022, this special budget for aid for Ukraine was increased to **11 million euros**. The funds were used for the reception and accommodation of the people seeking protection (3.5 million euros), the procurement and distribution of aid supplies (2.75 million euros), for advice and counselling, care and other support services as well as administrative work (3.5 million euros), and to financially support the activities of civil society actors (1.25 million euros).

By the decision of the council meeting on 19 May 2022, **40 million euros** were allocated for accommodation for people from Ukraine seeking protection and for setting up and running community housing for the year 2022.

Support for civil society initiatives

The city of Leipzig supported the extraordinary civil society commitment to aid for Ukraine with a special funding budget of **1.25 million euros**. Between 15 March and 15 September 2022, 63 applications from initiatives in Leipzig for a municipal grant were processed, with the

applications for funding totalling almost **1.7 million euros**. The civil society initiatives offer, among other things, the following:

- Help for the people in Ukraine as well as hospitals and civil protection in Ukraine by providing humanitarian, medical and technical supplies;
- the coordination of volunteers and (material-) donations for people seeking protection in Leipzig;
- support for families;
- the integration of young Ukrainian refugees by including them in the so-called network of small workshops ("Netz kleiner Werkstätten") and
- advice, help and support for Ukrainian refugees with hearing impairment.

Six organisational units (department for international cooperation, department for migration and integration, city treasury, department for democracy and social cohesion, department for equality, and office for economic development), internally referred to as the "funding factory", worked together in a cooperative and productive manner. As a spill over effect, this cooperation also helped accelerate and improve collaboration between the departments. The Department for Migration and Integration was in charge of the project.

Funding for associations and initiatives from Leipzig Crowd donations

As part of aid for Ukraine in 2022, on 3 March 2022 the city of Leipzig and the municipal utility Leipzig Group set up a joint fundraising campaign on the crowdfunding platform www.leipziger-crowd.de; its goal was to collect as many euros in donations as there are residents of Leipzig. Within just four days, more than 100,000 euros had been donated by members of the public, associations and companies. On 18 June 2022, the target amount of 609,969 euros was reached.

This had been paid out in full by the end of 2022. The money went to 18 non-profit associations, aid organisations and projects in Leipzig, Krakow and Gdansk that organise collections of material donations and aid deliveries to Ukraine, take care of people seeking protection or help integrate Ukrainians abroad. The organisations included Leipzig helps Ukraine e.V. (57,000 euros), Berufsbildungswerk Leipzig für Hör- und Sprachgeschädigte gGmbH (8,000 euros), Public Value Hub gUG (37,000 euros) and European Ways e.V. (41,000 euros). Other donations went to the Polish associations Fundacja Gdańska (60,000 euros) and Siemacha (20,000 euros).

This campaign set up in Leipzig is by far the largest on any municipal crowdfunding platform in Germany.

Engagement-Zentrum aid centre and central email address

Just one week into the war and three days after the set-up of the coordination staff for the Ukraine unit (on 1 March 2022), it was possible to host a hybrid event with over 100 participants. This helped create focus areas and networks that formed a basis for cooperation.

The temporary “Engagement-Zentrum” aid centre was also set up to coordinate civic engagement and to train and deploy volunteers.

The city of Leipzig also created a central email address (ukraine@leipzig.de) to allow all stakeholders to exchange information. Since the email address was set up, more than 12,000 emails have been provided more than **4,000 people** with information. More than 2,000 people were registered in a volunteer database.

The Department for Democracy and Social Cohesion was in charge of the central email address and the Engagement-Zentrum aid centre. The department had just got a new head and not many staff members were available. What's more, delegating staff to the Ukraine aid department happened quite slowly initially.

Contacts were established with all active supporters and associations of Ukraine aid in Leipzig. This ensured good relations and communication with civil society and issues could be dealt with promptly.

The criticism often voiced about the city's communication was met by close discussions with the largest supporters of civil society's Ukraine aid. Initially, these meetings took place several times per week. Although this was very time-consuming, it did prevent a major (communication) crisis and many people received better support as a result.

The greatest challenge was probably the city's very slow (technical) communication and response structures, especially at the beginning, compared with how civil society actors communicated, namely fast and entirely digitally.

There was also a great deal of initial scepticism within the administration regarding the role of civil society and thus also about its own role as a mediator: Although most of the support came from civil society, especially in the beginning, many staff members perceived this civil society support, along with the accompanying concerns and suggestions, as a burden. The more productive involvement of private volunteers is another future task that needs to be addressed by the city's crisis preparation team.

Digital information portal

From the beginning, the focus of official communications was on the relevance and correctness of the communicated information and on its relevance to the addressees. This, along with the aim of making all information available in multiple languages, meant that there was necessarily a focus on making significant changes and developments.

A Ukraine section was created on the city's website at **www.leipzig.de** to provide up-to-date information. The Department for Migration and Integration made the pages available in Ukrainian and Russian and maintained them.

The pages and their daily updates were translated into Ukrainian and Russian. The design and updates of the pages were regularly discussed with the Communications Department and other stakeholders.

Competing with established networks of civil society actors was deliberately avoided. Civil society increasingly developed resilient communication structures, which were used in particular to disseminate information about essential developments, such as changes in the legal framework. The fact that a number of times details of new regulations at the state or federal level were brought to the attention of the city of Leipzig at a very late stage had a negative impact.

In addition, there was a certain amount of discrepancy between the official communication and the information published on the fast-moving social media. To counter this asymmetry, strategies were soon developed to solve this problem based on experiences made. One strategy was to publish information immediately in German, with translations into Russian and Ukrainian to follow later. Furthermore, the Engagement-Zentrum aid centre started to monitor social media activities.

Concert of the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at the Gewandhaus on 26 April 2022

As ambassador of its country, the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra went on a concert tour of Germany. It gave concerts in Dresden, Berlin, Wiesbaden, Freiburg, Hanover and Hamburg as well as in Kyiv's twin city of Leipzig (at the Gewandhaus on 26 April 2022). Luigi Gaggero has been conducting the Kiev Symphony Orchestra since 2018. On the MDR television channel¹ he emphasised the important reason for this concert tour for him and the orchestra:

"One of the motivations for this war is that Putin thought that Ukraine doesn't actually exist. But if you know the country's art, its history and music, you can see that this repertoire has a very unique identity and that there are many points of contact with the European repertoire – many more than you might think. We aim to emphasise this in our interpretation."

Luigi Gaggero, conductor of the Kiev Symphony Orchestra

The Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine played at the opening of the Bach Festival on 9 June 2022

The concert of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine was streamed live around the world from the Thomaskirche on 9 June 2022 at the opening of the Bach Festival.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the orchestra has not been able to perform or rehearse, which is why during the concert the organisers asked for donations for the upkeep of the Ukrainian orchestra. The organisation of the

¹ MDR (2022): The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra as artistic and political ambassador. View at: <https://www.mdr.de/mdr-klassik-radio/klassikthemen/ukraine-sinfonieorchester-kiew-deutschlandtournee-100.html> (last accessed on 16 January 2023).

event also posed big challenges. Because the orchestra members come from many remote parts of Ukraine, a bus was organised. On MDR, Michael Maul, artistic director of the Bach Festival Leipzig, said the following²:

"They set off during a bomb alert." Now they are very happy, he says, "the music city of Leipzig is welcoming the orchestra."

Michael Maul, artistic director of the Bach Festival Leipzig:

Ukraine Theme Day on 24 August 2022

On Sunday, 21 August, a few days before Ukraine's Independence Day on 24 August – and six months after the start of the Russian attack – Ukraine and its capital Kyiv were the focus of a Theme Day on Leipzig's Burgplatz.

For one day, visitors had the chance to learn more about Leipzig's oldest twin city and the country, merged cardboard replicas of Leipzig



Image 2 Ukraine Theme Day 2022. Photo: Department for International Cooperation

² MDR (2022): The Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine as a guest at the Bach Festival in Leipzig. View at: <https://www.mdr.de/mdr-klassik-radio/klassikthemen/bachfest-leipzig-jugendsinfonieorchester-ukraine-100.html> (last accessed on 16 January 2023).

and Kyiv into one city and made the typical Ukrainian flower wreaths. They tasted typical Ukrainian foods, and the highlight of the evening was delivered by the bandura band Shpylyasti Kobzari from Kyiv.

"I come from Kyiv myself. I very much miss my city and my grandparents who stayed at home. I sent them photos from the festival. I am very happy. It makes my homesickness a little more bearable."

Ukrainian refugees on the day of the event

The event was organised by the Department for International Cooperation in close cooperation with the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic community of Leipzig. The refugees from Ukraine were very grateful for the event. The fact that their culture, whose very existence is repeatedly called into question in Russian propaganda, was presented in such a dynamic and lively way in Leipzig's city centre was movingly commented on by many Ukrainian visitors on the day of the event.

Many similar events were hosted in the spirit of solidarity throughout Leipzig. At the end of May, for example, hopeful sounds were played in the "Pavilion of Hope". The Leipzig Synagogue Choir and two youth choirs from Kyiv sang together, taking a stand for peace and solidarity through music. Originally, a Leipzig Project Week was planned for May 2022 as part of the 60th anniversary of the twinning of the two cities, and the concert had been planned as the opening event. Given the circumstances, it was instead hosted as a fundraising concert in Leipzig.

"Events like this are important, as a group they give us strength and courage during this difficult time."

Ukrainian refugees on the day of the event

Leipzig says thank you: Concert for Ukraine helpers on 15 September 2022 at the Gewandhaus

A free concert was hosted at the Gewandhaus by the city of Leipzig to thank all members of the public who helped during the Ukraine crisis, and who may still be helping the refugees now. During the brutal war of aggression on Ukraine, many determined and committed members of the public gave hope and a new home to the refugees.

To express its thanks, the city of Leipzig put on an event for the hosts, helpers and everyone else involved on Thursday, 15 September 2022 at 8pm: The Gewandhaus Orchestra, conducted by Andris Nelsons, played works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Dmitri Shostakovich and Ludwig van Beethoven.

Shelter and clearing facility

The shelter and clearing facility takes custody of underage refugees who arrive in Germany without a legal guardian. It offers protection, accommodation, care and support to underage refugees as soon as they arrive. The facility is under the responsibility of the Office for Youth and Family.

While the children stay at the facility, their future prospects are clarified. They will leave the facility to live in a housing group or to get reunited with their family.

A small number of children refugees from Ukraine who arrived in Germany without a guardian were taken in by the shelter and clearing facility. In total, **36 Ukrainian children** were taken in.

The children, all of them male, were between the ages of 15 and 17. They stayed for an average of 32 days.

There are two main differences between the Ukrainian children and children from elsewhere:

They had not experienced war, its consequences and traumas for months or years, but rather they came from a **country where a war had just broken out that had torn the young people out of their social and societal connections and traumatised them**. Many of the children were under shock and torn from their normal lives. This meant that they not only required shelter and continuous socio-educational support, but also the possibility of getting in touch with their family in Ukraine and integration into the local Ukrainian community.

Until the beginning of the war, these children had been embedded in their country's social and societal structures. They attended schools, training courses and recreational facilities. They very much hoped to be able to participate in social and societal life during their stay at the facility. The possibility of online schooling and attending sports clubs gave the children a degree of support.

One challenge here is taking care of and supporting each individual child within the group setting. One needs a good eye for individual needs based on their specific experiences and traumas as well as possible illnesses. In addition, the children need support in their daily lives in a foreign culture and also help getting in touch with their families at home.

Help and travel centre at the central railway station

By far the largest number of refugees arrived in Leipzig by train at the central railway station.

From mid-March to the end of September, the help and travel centre at the central railway station was open around the clock, after which it was open daily from 9am to 5:30pm. During this time, **more than 12,000 refugees** were cared for and given support and advice here by many volunteers, the humanitarian organisation Johanniter and staff from the department of health and Deutsche Bahn.

Traumatised, tired, often hungry and cold, the mostly women and children suddenly found themselves in a railway station in a big city in a foreign country. They felt great relief when they met the friendly and caring volunteers here who welcomed them to Leipzig day and night, and helped them find somewhere to stay and overcome other challenges. The volunteers

continuously passed on information about issues and needs to the city administration and other agencies so that help could be provided as quickly and as effectively as possible. Here, too, there were initially communication problems between civil society and the official bodies. In addition to carrying out Covid tests, hotel accommodation was organised for people with special needs, tickets for onward journeys were issued, cuddly toys were given out to provide comfort and contacts with the authorities were arranged.

In March 2022, on behalf of the city of Leipzig, funded and organised by the humanitarian organisation Johanniter, an official help and travel centre was opened in Leipzig's central railway station. In each shift, ten volunteers and ten Johanniter staff, with the support of interpreters, offered information and assistance to the refugees, gave them food and drink, a place to rest and, if necessary, a place to spend the night. They took care of any medical needs and explained what will happen next.

Image 3 Help and travel centre at the central railway station. Photo: Preller (firefighting authority)



A specialist in internal medicine and nephrology who is also an emergency doctor was one of the first on the scene; she recruited additional volunteer doctors through various channels and networks. Most recently, a group of over 180 doctors worked in three shifts to care for the refugees at the central railway station. Members of the public and medical staff donated medicines. Initially, people were cared for in a temporary medical room at the help and travel centre. The helpers were able to bridge three weeks until the city of Leipzig found its own solution and opened a Medpoint practice at Am Brühl, which was run independently.

All of this was only possible thanks to the close cooperation between civil society actors, aid organisations, the railway station management, Leipzig's public transport operators, the city administration and the residents of Leipzig.

Refugees who arrived in the country with their pets posed a particular challenge. In many cases, however, the helpers were able to find a solution with the support of associations, vets and private individuals.

The new Arrival Centre

An arrival centre was set up where people who had fled Ukraine could register and be cared for.

From 9 March to 22 March 2022, the Arrival Centre was located in the lower Wandelhalle hall in New City Hall. The centre then moved to the Gerda Taro school and, since 7 June 2022, it has been located in House B of the Technisches Rathaus.

There, the Foreigners Office, the Social Welfare Office, the Department for Migration and Integration and the Citizens Service Centre are able to offer all of their services under one roof. This allows applications to be processed quickly and also saves applicants from having to go through numerous official channels separately. During this initial phase in particular, the offices were able to discuss and implement (legal) requirements and changes that were

important for the processes in the Arrival Centre. They discussed how new regulations are to be interpreted and what consequences they have in the context of residence and social law for the people seeking protection in order to be able to advise them properly and accurately.

Challenges in the early days

Information for Ukrainian refugees circulated on social media and other platforms that was not always correct or did not apply in the Free State of Saxony or in the city of Leipzig.

Since the refugees received their initial advice by the staff of the Department for Migration and Integration in front of the New City Hall and later in a tent in the outdoor area of the Gerda Taro school, compliance with data protection requirements was a challenge. The staff were usually approached by several people at the same time. Despite being asked to move out of earshot, people intervened in conversations

Image 4 The Arrival Centre. Photo: Raisan Hameed



and sometimes passed on information that was misunderstood or misinterpreted.

"At first, the 'advice tent' was in the midst of hundreds of people seeking protection. Some had camped out in front of the New City Hall and waited overnight for the opportunity to register the next day. It looked as if people were trading places in the queue with each other, because a list circulated that was not created by the city. The situation in the first days was very chaotic and there were arguments between people. The staff were therefore confronted with many negative emotions and frustration. They were identifiable as city staff and, given the open space, they felt exposed and were made responsible for the perceived 'lack of a system'."

Especially at the beginning, people's personal tragedies and emotions had a significant and unfiltered impact on the staff, and there were not enough opportunities to get some time alone and process the experiences. This caused tremendous emotional strain, especially due to the lack of additional staff."

Member of staff of the city of Leipzig



Image 5 Children's play corner in the waiting area of the Arrival Centre. Photo: Raisan Hameed

Easy-to-access advice in several languages

The Department for Migration and Integration provided easy-to-access advice in Ukrainian, Russian, English and German for people from Ukraine and for their helpers. Five staff members advised the new arrivals in a tent in front of the arrival centre. This easy-to-access advice was part of an active welcoming culture designed to provide information on all aspects of everyday life in Leipzig, prevent misinformation and reduce the risk of vulnerable groups of people getting exploited.

Between 24 February and 31 June 2022, the department's staff conducted more than **8,500 advisory meetings**. The extraordinary commitment shown by the staff and the synergy effects between all the players involved ensured that the advice was of a very high quality at all times.

The departmental staff was not able to offer advice to the many refugees in the long term. Not least because it required knowledge of Russian and Ukrainian. The Department of Knowledge Policy therefore provided contacts to students at the University of Leipzig with knowledge of Russian and Ukrainian. The Department for Migration and Integration then recruited the students, coordinated their department and paid them for their work. They received daily



*Image 6 Staff at the Arrival Centre
Photo: Raisan Hameed*

training and were informed about changes in the administrative process as well as legal changes, which the students passed on in their capacity as support advisors.

Many different topics were discussed. Such as the:

- legal possibilities of staying in Leipzig,
- types of accommodation,
- applying for social benefits,
- obtaining phone cards,
- opening a bank account,
- the recognition of qualifications,
- the possibilities of finding work and somewhere to live,
- the options for study and language learning, children's daycare and school enrolment,
- volunteer support and provision of food,
- protection of women and vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities,
- health and medical care,
- driving license transfer,
- free use of public transport or the possibilities of leaving and re-entering the country.

Over time, a large amount of information in the refugees' languages on all aspects of life was collected and distributed in the form of flyers

and via QR codes. The information in the form of flyers etc. were available in all offices of the city administration.

People were referred to the services of the Leipzig Welcome Centre for more advice. From March to November 2022, some **370 people** were provided with **advice** there in a safe space.

In the arrival centre, all staff were instructed to provide third-party nationals who had fled Ukraine about their options under residence and social law and ensure that they have equal access to the services offered there. The small number of complaints about discriminatory behaviour were always taken seriously and followed up on.

A particular focus was on providing advice for these same third-country nationals from Ukraine. For them, residence law processes were more complicated and some people had already experienced discrimination after entering the country. As a result, several online events were hosted in multiple languages to inform this target group about their rights and options. The same was done for Ukrainian nationals.

The department also organised continuous interpreting during all processes in the Arrival Centre and the other administrative offices.

A major challenge was to inform the Ukrainian refugees and the many volunteers who took them in or supported them in other ways about the procedures, necessary documents, and competent authorities.


The vast majority of the Ukrainians had found accommodation in private households with private individuals from Leipzig. The staff at the Arrival Centre worked full steam and the processes were well organised. Ukrainian refugees were registered promptly and their social and residence rights dealt with. However, the waiting times and the administrative requirements were often met with a lack of understanding on the part of those providing support and accommodation. In many cases,

this was the first time that the German hosts had come into contact with their country's social and foreigners' administration processes. In addition, it was clear that some people were stressed; they shared their problems and their living space with strangers, who in turn were often stressed because they were separated from family members, or suffered illness or trauma.

Registration of residential addresses

Within a short space of time, **10,458 people** could be **registered to a residential address**. The registration of a home address is the first step for all people seeking protection in Germany, and the starting point for all further applications.

All (supporting) documents were checked and electronically recorded and made available for use in the subsequent steps at the Foreigners Office and the Social Welfare Office. This hugely increased the efficiency of the various public authorities and significantly reduced waiting times for visitors.

**Stadt Leipzig**

Інформація щодо Картки мешканця Лейпцига

Що таке Картка мешканця Лейпцига?

Картка мешканця Лейпцига дозволяє мешканцям міста Лейпцига з низькими доходами дешевше користуватися культурними та спортивними установами та заходами. Картка мешканця Лейпцига забезпечує знижки при використанні міського транспорту та освітніх програм. Вона діє 12 місяців та видається безкоштовно.

Які документи потрібні для подання заяви?

- Посвідчення особи / закордонний паспорт
- Фото на документи (ціна для громадян від 14 років оплачується заявником.)
- Документ, що підтверджує витрати на житло (діючий договір оренди)
- Довідка про доходи
 - Довідка про отримання допомоги з безробіття II (Arbeitslosengeld II), соціальної допомоги або виплат

Image 7 At leipzig.de, information about the Leipzig Pass is available in English, Ukrainian, Russian and other languages, and the application can be submitted online.



Image 8 Advice sessions at the Arrival Centre. Photo: Raisan Hameed

The Leipzig Pass

5,707 Leipzig Passes were issued to improve social participation for people. The Leipzig Pass allows residents of the city of Leipzig on low incomes to use cultural and sports facilities for a discount. It also offers discounts on local public transport and educational services. The Leipzig Pass is free of charge.

The digitisation of the Leipzig Pass application for refugees from Ukraine meant that people did not have to attend in person, which in turn sped up the issuing process significantly. Information on changes in legislation and procedures could be communicated quickly and to the right addressees. It was very convenient that the staff of the citizens service had been granted access to the specialised procedures of the Social Welfare Office, which meant that applicants did not have to submit their supporting documents again.

Registration under immigration law and access to social security systems

At the Arrival Centre, the Foreigners Office is responsible for the initial registration of the applicants and for providing identity services. This is also where the residential documents are issued, without which no other services can be used (such as unemployment benefit). In addition, the obligation to take up residence or its cancellation is looked into and information on the rights and obligations of people seeking protection in Germany is distributed. From March to November, some **10,400 registrations** were made and residence documents issued, allowing the refugees to receive support and be integrated quickly and easily.

On 1 June 2022, the federal legislature amended the regulations: This means that people are entitled to benefits from the job centre (SGB II) or the social welfare office (SGB XII) only once they have gone through the identity

service process. For old cases (registrations before 1 June 2022), a transitional period was agreed within which the identity service process had to be carried out. Of the around 10,800 war refugees from Ukraine who found refuge in Leipzig at that time, around 9,000 were registered at the Arrival Centre before 1 June 2022.

On 31 October 2022, the deadline for the completion of the identity service process of the approximately 9,000 refugees from Ukraine who fled to Leipzig from March to May expired. The identity service process involved taking a photograph and fingerprints using a special device (personalisation infrastructure component = PIK) of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and comparing these biometric features with the wanted list of the police.

For the Foreigners Office part of the arrival centre, this meant that within a very short time – in addition to recent new arrivals – around 9,000 cases had to be processed again in the arrival centre. Since the positions allocated as part of a fast-track procedure were not sufficient for this purpose, more staff had to be deployed

from other parts of the administration, even if this meant that work was left undone elsewhere and colleagues had to fill these gaps.

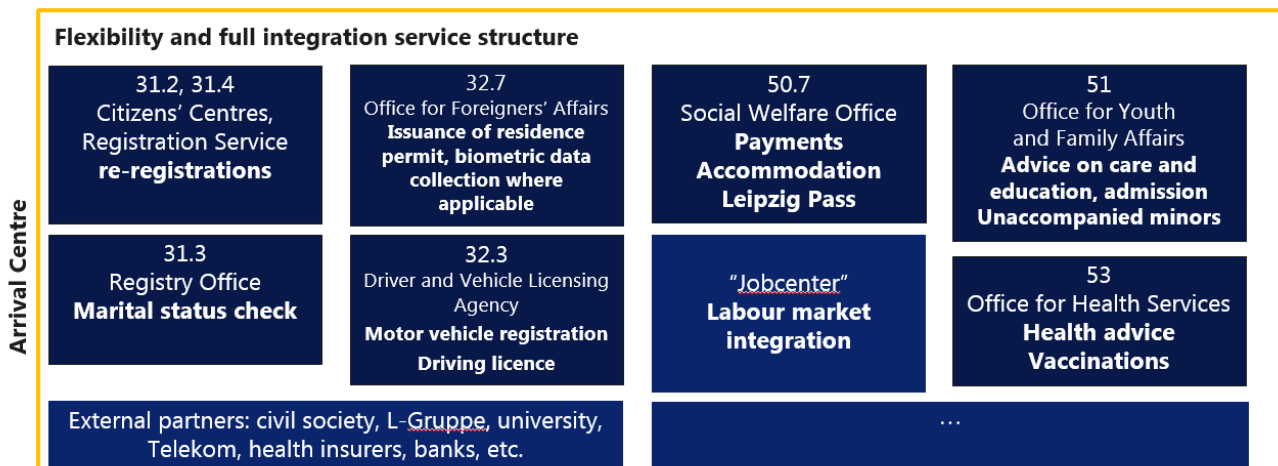
This was a major accomplishment on the part of the team at the Arrival Centre, which in the summer consisted of around 30 staff from the Citizens Service, the Foreigners Office, seconded colleagues and interns. By carrying out the identification service so quickly, the city of Leipzig achieved its goal of providing these people with uninterrupted access to work and the social security systems. It was possible to master this challenge only thanks to the teamwork of all the offices and the dedicated efforts of the seconded staff.

Only a small number of people, despite multiple reminders, did not book an appointment at the Arrival Centre or did not attend their appointment. The vast majority were able to be identified in time and issued with a residence permit until March 2024. This and the continued lively exchange between the Foreigners Office and the Job Centre ensures that the livelihood of these people remains secured.



Added value Arrival Centre - medium term

Processes medium term 3-6 months after arrival



Other locations

Follow-up processes can also be moved to the Arrival Centre.

Image 9 The newly created flexibility and full integration of the structure of the Arrival Centre

Social security

The Social Welfare Office was responsible for providing benefits under the asylum seekers benefits law (AsylbLG) for all refugees from Ukraine from 24 February 2022 to 31 May 2022. Staff from the Social Welfare Office are also present at the Arrival Centre to ensure rapid protection and coordination with other administrative offices.

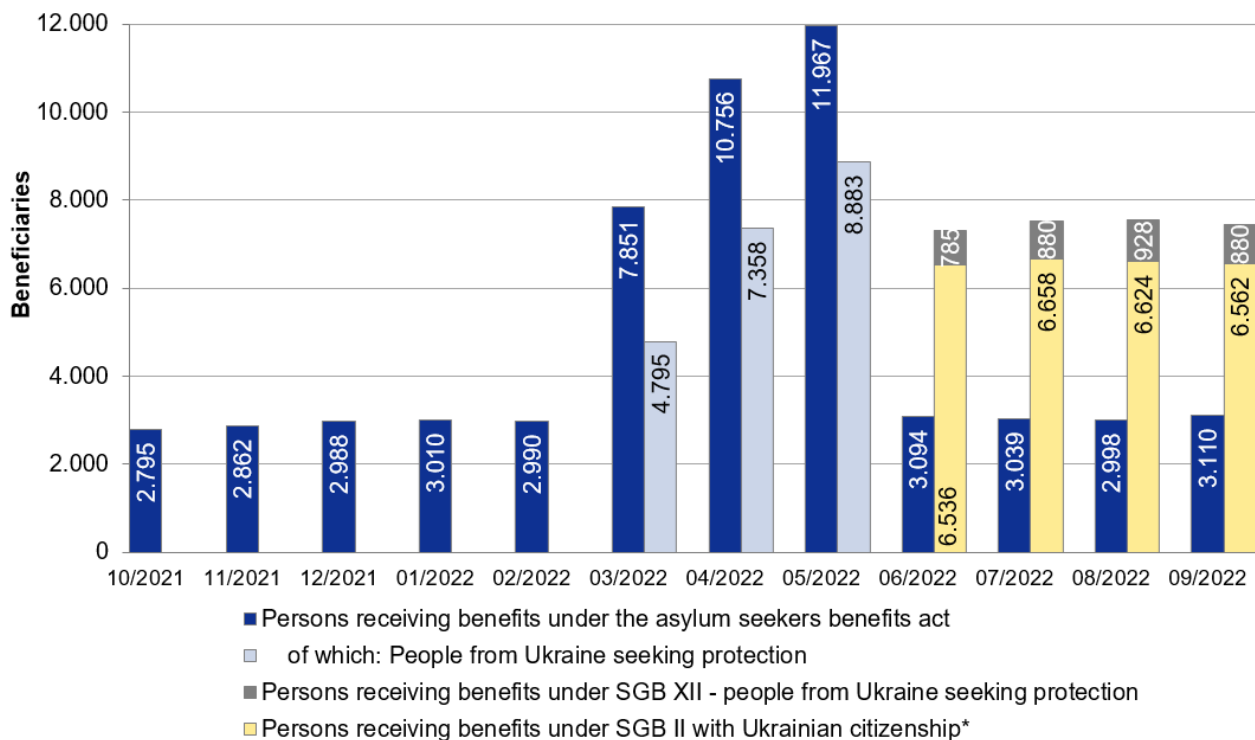
As a result of the enormous commitment on the part of the staff, refugees from Ukraine received benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefit Law (AsylbLG) if they were unable to support themselves. This included money for food, clothing, sanitary items and other essential personal items, as well as medical care. In addition, the costs of accommodation were covered within the framework of the legal requirements. As of 31 May 2022, approximately **8,900 protection seekers from Ukraine** received **benefits according to AsylbLG**.

Since 1 June 2022, the Social Welfare Office has been responsible for providing "General

Social Assistance" benefits according to Social Code 12 (SGB XII) to vulnerable persons from Ukraine with pension entitlements or of pension age. The number of refugees from Ukraine receiving benefits under SGB XII rose from June and fell again from August. In individual cases, benefits are still granted under the asylum seekers benefits law (AsylbLG).

The Social Welfare Office staff were supported by staff from other areas of the Social Welfare Office and the city administration. As a result, and through continuous readjustment of the procedures and processes in the processing of benefits and accommodation, it was possible to care for and accommodate the many refugees from Ukraine in Leipzig.

Challenges included the limited ability to plan ahead and the very high workload over an extended period of time. For example, not enough additional staff was available and new members had to be trained on-the-job. As of 1 June 2022, 22 additional positions had been created



Source: Social Welfare Office and Job Centre, updated 12/31/2022, *Federal Employment Agency, updated 01/03/2023

Image 10 Beneficiaries under the AsylbLG

in the Social Welfare Office to cover tasks related to the reception of refugees from Ukraine (VII-DS-07118).

This was compounded by an unclear legal situation and, by extension, a constantly changing legal framework with regard to benefit law, and admission procedures as well as constantly changing requirements and deviations from the usual standards in accommodation.

Due to the large number of people applying for benefits at the Social Welfare Office on Prager Strasse within a short period of time from 24 February 2022, processing times there increased. As a result, more complaints were received about long processing times, which also had to be dealt.

Innovative and citizen-centric management

The Association of the Hearing Impaired in Leipzig arranges group appointments for hearing-impaired people from Ukraine so that they can attend together along with sign language interpreters, rather than individually, to have their residence documents renewed. The Foreigners Office had previously only offered individual appointments; this was now flexibly adapted for the benefit of the people with hearing impairment.

The issuing of appointments and residence permits for Ukrainian educators was given priority so that they could be available to care for Ukrainian children and ease the burden of parents.

The Montessori school centre planned a trip to Rome for its students, which included several Ukrainian children without passports or residence permits. The children were given appointments at short notice and school collection lists were created to allow the Ukrainian children to go on the trip.

A similar procedure was followed for Antonov staff, who needed residence permits at short notice because their work involves crossing

borders. The company registered the staff members concerned with the Foreigners Office and informed their staff about the documents they need. These people were prioritised in the name of public interest, were given an early appointment and, if the requirements were met, were immediately issued a residence permit.

The Arrival Centre of the city of Leipzig received the **award for innovative and citizen-centric management 2022**. The prize is the initiative of the Public Service Lab and the HTW Berlin and is awarded for user-friendliness. The award ceremony was held in Freiburg on 14 October 2022.

Accommodation

The Social Welfare Office provides accommodation for refugees from Ukraine if no other accommodation is available with private individuals or third parties.

One of the tasks of the Social Welfare Office is the acquisition and procurement of accommodation for refugees from Ukraine. The Social Welfare Office examines properties with regard to their suitability, conducts rental contract or purchase negotiations and prepares decision papers for the committees of the city administration. The Social Welfare Office and the Main Office furnish the accommodation (they buy furniture and organise transport and storage). The Social Welfare Office also negotiates and concludes contracts with accommodation providers. The providers make available social care staff who advise and support the residents.



Image 12 Materials in the accommodation for refugees at 37 Friederikenstrasse. Photo: Leipzig Social Welfare Office



Image 11 Shared accommodation for refugees at 37 Friederikenstrasse. Photo: Leipzig Social Welfare Office

Since February 2022, **four additional shared accommodation facilities for about 500 refugees** from Ukraine have been set up. In addition, two tent sites were temporarily used as emergency shelters to accommodate refugees from Ukraine. At the end of October 2022, another **530 refugees** from Ukraine lived in **hostels, guesthouses, holiday apartments and lodger flats** rented by the Social Welfare Office for this purpose. At the end of October 2022, some **100 refugees** from Ukraine lived in **assisted living accommodation** of the Social Welfare Office.

In addition, on behalf of the Social Welfare Office, housing offers from private landlords were arranged for refugees from Ukraine by the association Kontaktstelle Wohnen des Zusammen e.V.

Example: Starting up a shared accommodation facility for refugees at 37 Friederikenstrasse.

On 24 March 2022, the mayor of the city of Leipzig decided in his official consultation to set up another shared accommodation facility for refugees from Ukraine at 37 Friederikenstrasse. The property was rented from April 2022, renovated and furnished. For example, furniture,

mattresses and pots and pans had to be purchased and made available to the future residents. The facility can accommodate up to 250 people. It opened in August 2022.

The facility currently still involves a lot of administrative work: the monitoring of current contacts, the checking of invoices and contacts with contractual partners.



Image 13 Materials in the accommodation for refugees at 37 Friederikenstrasse. Photo: Leipzig Social Welfare Office

Kindergarten, school and after-school care

Ukrainian families receive immediate support in integrating their children into kindergartens, schools and after-school care.

In addition, in the area of school infrastructure, material and organisational resources were quickly made available to ensure that Ukrainian children and young people could attend classes. In cooperation with other services and public authorities, about 75 preparatory classes in all types of schools were set up for about 2,100 children and young people from Ukraine. In the medium term, the processes and structures must be further adapted and supported with additional resources.

Kindergarten

The city of Leipzig accepts Ukrainian children into the municipal daycare centres that are run by independent organisations. In order to ensure that the children settle in well, the families get help with dealing with the authorities to enable them to settle in quickly in Leipzig. So far, **over 350 Ukrainian children** have been well integrated into Leipzig's daycare centres. The staff of the Leipzig city administration are in close contact with the families and support them if they have questions.

Ukrainian staff have also been employed and integrated into the teams and the daily work routine. The Ukrainian professionals are very motivated and grateful.

Language barriers between parents, children and educational staff (German and Ukrainian) are often a challenge. The work with parents is sometimes very challenging, because in addition to the care tasks, social work tasks are also often involved and the parents approach the educational professionals with questions about it. Despite these challenges, all staff members do their best to ensure a successful daily routine.

"The grandmother of family S., who lives in Germany, established contact with one of our municipal daycare centres. We integrated child D. from 1 August 2022. D.'s mother is now attending an integration course in order to be able to later join the German labour market. The family is very grateful for the good care they received and the integration of the whole family."

Staff member at the municipal daycare centre

The daycare centre at Kändlerstraße, for example, took in and helped more than 58 families. Offerings for Ukrainian families were set up quickly: This includes initial assistance with applications to administrative offices and referrals to aid institutions. Families are given strong support, especially during the children's transition from kindergarten to school (8 children) as well as during the transition to a regular daycare centre (12 families). Thanks to the interpreters sent by the specialist department and the involvement of Ukrainian professionals in the daycare centre, the children quickly settled in. The families also felt valued and actively and openly participated in all activities.

"The parents of Family G. are deaf, but the son is not. During the initial interview, a family member living in Ukraine took part over the phone. The family member spoke with our translator and then translated this into sign language for the parents. Since the child already had behavioural problems in Ukraine, we helped them to find a paediatrician and supported further communication with him. The boy is currently being cared for in an outpatient centre and has made great social-emotional progress. This has made things easier for the parents and enabled the child to participate more in the day-to-day life at the daycare centre. At the same time, it was possible to improve his developmental progress this way."

School registration

Questions and problems regarding school enrolment could usually be dealt with quickly. Difficulties are caused by a lack of special needs school procedures if the pupils don't get the appropriate support. Then there are the language barriers when there are no Ukrainian-speaking teachers or school assistants.

In March 2022, the Saxon State Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs made it much easier for children to register for a place in Saxony's schools. At "www.schulportal.sachsen.de/ukraine" you can find a form that can also be read in Ukrainian and English. Registration is possible even if not all documents are available.

The problems concerned entering records into the Saxon school administration system (SaxSVS) with insufficient information on people's previous career path or Ukrainian documents with missing translations.

Pupils coming and leaving at short notice significantly increased the workload. This also applies to registering and de-registering for free meals.

Driving services for students with disabilities

Pupils with disabilities who need a ride to and from school were quickly integrated into existing service schedules.

Eligibility requirements (severely disabled person's ID etc.) can often not be verified. In these cases, existing (medical) documents are simply recognised in consultation with the schools or documents are submitted later.

Modern technology

Hybrid technology, presentation technology and mobile devices were purchased for the preparatory classes. This greatly accelerated the integration of Ukrainian pupils, because it

The screenshot shows the website www.schulportal.sachsen.de. The header features the Saxon state logo and the text "sachsen.de". The main heading is "Aufnahmeverfahren von schulpflichtigen ukrainischen Kindern und Jugendlichen an sächsischen Schulen / Procedure for admitting school-age Ukrainian children to Saxon schools / Порядок запису дітей та підлітків шкільного віку до школи в Саксонії". Below this is a language selection dropdown menu with the text "Sprache / Language / мову: *" and "Bitte auswählen / Please select / Виберіть, будь ласка". The footer contains contact information for the "Herausgeber" (Landesamt für Schule und Bildung) and a "Service" section with a link to "Impressum".

Image 14 Screenshot of the school portal, which is at www.schulportal.sachsen.de

makes multilingual instruction possible and provides access to Ukrainian teaching and learning materials.

Challenging factors were the delivery difficulties of the technology and further training needs for the teachers.

Expansion of media collections in school libraries and reading rooms

To support rapid integration with the aim of promoting learning German as an educational language, the media collections in school libraries and reading rooms at schools in the city of Leipzig were adapted to meet the needs of Ukrainian pupils. The media include fiction in Ukrainian, picture dictionaries and games for learning German as well as bilingual media (German/Ukrainian).

The media in Ukrainian were very well received by primary school pupils, but not as much in the high schools and grammar schools.

After-school care

At the 23 municipal primary schools with preparatory classes, 351 Ukrainian children have been enrolled in after-school care so far. The open work structure in the after-school care promotes integration.

An essential condition for the successful integration and participation of Ukrainian children in after-school activities is the overcoming of language barriers. This was possible in part through the involvement of Ukrainian or Russian-speaking educators in the after-school care or the temporary involvement of language and cultural mediators. In facilities without permanent translation staff, communication between parents, children and educational professionals was very challenging, especially as parents needed support in addition to childcare.

Four Ukrainian specialists with sufficient knowledge of German or English were recruited to work in the municipal after-school care.

These staff members work in four different after-school care, where they are very well integrated into the team.

A working group was set up by staff members of the city administration to support the institutions with Ukrainian children. The working group provides the professionals from after-school care with Ukrainian children with a framework that allows them to exchange information about needs, successful strategies and challenges and to learn from each other. The working group is supported by a staff member from the specialist department.

Employment service

Both the Job Centre and the Federal Employment Agency were represented at the Arrival Centre in the Gerda Taro school. On 1 June 2022, the Job Centre accepted Ukrainian war refugees to the Basic Minimum Income (SGB II) benefits scheme. For this purpose, low-threshold access was created to ensure that people receive the support they need in filling out the applications. This meant that applications were processed and benefits were paid out quickly.

The focus is currently on providing advice on all topics related to labour market integration. In a first step, learning German is promoted as well as the recognition of foreign qualifications; the latter in cooperation with the labour market information and advisory service Saxony (IBAS).

As part of the network and district work, information events are held for Ukrainian war refugees, volunteers and full-time helpers and advisors. An open consultation hour on all topics related to labour market integration and benefits is held monthly at the Welcome Centre.

Numbers, data, facts

As of July, the Leipzig Job Centre has 6,658 Ukrainian refugees on its books. This includes all people who receive the standard benefits from the Job Centre (including children and persons unable to work). 4,610 of them are employable.

Almost half of the war refugees from Ukraine registered at the Job Centre are already enrolled in language courses.

"Initial interview: Ms P. (anonymised) with 2 children (8 years and 6 months) has already found somewhere to live. In Ukraine she worked as a teacher. Ms P. knows a little German and has already applied to work as a kindergarten teacher for Ukrainian children because she can take her younger child to work with her. Two weeks later, the employment contract was submitted."

Staff member at the Job Centre

The feedback from the market and integration sector and from the information events show that Ukrainian war refugees are highly motivated and have many different good qualifications. They are very inquisitive and very interested in joining the job market and integrating into society.

"Initial interview: Ms Y. (anonymised) has a 17-year-old child, knows very little German and has already found somewhere to live. She has a full-time employment contract starting on the first of next month as a quality control inspector at BMW: Checklists in English, translator provided by employer. Ms Y. asks if she can attend a part-time language course. She was provided with advice on integration courses and a document to sign."

Staff member at the Job Centre

Many people from Ukraine are making obvious progress with their German language skills. According to feedback from the teams and the recognition advice centre IBAS, advisory sessions are increasingly possible without an interpreter even after a relatively short period of language course attendance.

Challenges

The transitional process to the area of responsibility of the Job Centre had to be organised and implemented in a very short time. Extensive restructuring and great flexibility were necessary to cope with the new tasks and maintain normal everyday business at the same time.

Due to a lack of language mediation resources, processes at the Job Centre are getting delayed. 12 language mediators (for Russian and Ukrainian) were recruited to support the teams and the advisory sessions. Additional freelancers were also hired.

Aid for Ukraine

With regard to the procurement and distribution of aid supplies, the city of Leipzig sees its task in particular in the procurement of medical supplies and medicines as well as protective equipment and technical relief supplies for transport to Ukraine. In this way the city of Leipzig complements the support provided by the people of Leipzig and their generous donations to the project, as well as the support of civil society initiatives, companies and organisations.

The distribution of the aid supplies procured by the city of Leipzig is carried out partly via a logistics bridge organised in connection with Leipzig's city partnerships with Krakow and Kyiv, and partly as direct deliveries to Kyiv. The main aid goods logistics hub was initially the collection centre Nord set up at Roscherstraße cable hall of Leipzig's public utilities. In mid-May, the logistics hub was relocated to Kohlraßplatz in cooperation with the association Humanitäre Hilfe Ukraine e. V.

The procurement of general aid supplies was carried out by the central distribution office of the city of Leipzig based on lists from the twin city of Kyiv. The focus of the deliveries initially included tents together with accessories and equipment, in particular camp beds, sleeping bags, bedding and mattresses as well as first aid materials, sanitary and baby items as well as clothing. In addition, non-perishable foods, including tinned foods, as well as DIY supplies such as camping stoves, gas cartridges and water cans were delivered to Kyiv on their request. As well as these basic essentials, radio technology, power generators and personal protective equipment for city employees in the twin city of Kyiv were procured.

Medical supplies are procured on behalf of the city by the Sankt Georg clinic. Here, too, procurement is based on lists provided by the twin city of Kyiv. Medical supplies are transported exclusively via and in close cooperation with the twin city of Krakow. The focus here is on medical technology (operating tables, incubators, respirators), consumables (gloves, rescue



Image 15 Handover of the aid convoy to Dr Bogdan Balasynovych, advisor to Kyiv's mayor Dr Vitali Klitschko on 15 July 2022

blankets, surgical instruments and laryngeal tubes) as well as medicines and infusions based on lists provided by hospitals in Kyiv.

In addition, an operating microscope urgently needed in Kyiv was procured from Poland and shipped directly to Kyiv via Krakow.

Outside the Ukraine aid budget (see VII-DS-06916 resolution item 4), three fire engines were given away free of charge by the fire directorate in response to needs from the twin city of Kyiv and the Republic of Moldova (1 vehicle).

Kyiv is beginning to need different items, including commercial vehicles, construction machinery and vehicles to help with the reconstruction of Kyiv. These vehicles, as well as two vehicles auctioned by the association Humanitäre Hilfe Leipzig e.V. from donations of the Leipzig Crowd together with two ambulances and fire engines from the Leipzig fire department and another fire engine donated by the Görlitz fire department, were handed over to representatives of the city of Kyiv in Leipzig on 15 July. The vehicles of the relief convoy were loaded with power generators, IBC containers for storing liquids, 100 hard hats, 120 compressed air breathing devices including 40 breathing cylinders as well as firefighter jackets, trousers and shirts.

As of the end of July, further procurement of aid supplies was suspended in order to conserve the remaining special Ukraine aid funds for possible new needs in the autumn. In view of the upcoming winter months and the ongoing destruction of critical infrastructure in Ukraine, it was of particular importance to our partners on the ground to secure power and heat supply for civil society and medical facilities. With the funds still available in the special budget and subsidies from the BMZ (around 44,400 euros), it was now possible to procure urgently needed generators (75 mobile generators) for a total of 100,000 euros.

The generators will be used primarily in medical facilities and civilian warming centres. Their arrival in Ukraine was confirmed on 30 January 2023.

Deliveries of aid supplies and vehicles are always carried out in close coordination and with the approval of the state directorate of Saxony.

Imprint

The Mayor of the City of Leipzig
Department of General Services
Postal address: 04092 Leipzig

Tel.: +49 341 123 22 00

Email: dezernat1@leipzig.de

Website: <http://www.leipzig.de>

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Cover photo

Wall with pictures painted by
children refugees at the Arrival Centre in Leipzig,
Gerda Taro school gym – grammar school
of the city of Leipzig, photo: Raisan Hameed
2022