



**RAINBOW'S STRUGGLE
IN DEFENCE OF
UKRAINE'S FREEDOM**

**АНГЛІЙСЬКА
СТОРОНА
ENGLISH SIDE**

**RAINBOW'S STRUGGLE
IN DEFENCE OF
UKRAINE'S FREEDOM**

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TOLERANTIŠKO
JAUNIMO
ASOCIACIJA



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INTRODUCTION

From the first days of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, its people realized that the freedom they enjoyed was not a given, that the freedom that had been defended on the Maidan and fought for since 2014 could once again be trampled and despised by hostile states and their leaders, who, because of their imperialist dreams, are ready to cause chaos in the world and fight a bloody war.

When the war in Ukraine started, the people of Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania actively collected and transported support to the war-torn country, helped the war refugees. The LGBTQ+ organizations and communities of the mentioned countries are no exception.

When Ukraine wins this war, what we firmly believe, homophobia will not disappear. On the contrary, with the strengthening of right-wing and ultra-right political forces, growing nationalism and opposition to European values, homophobic attitudes can only increase. It can be forgotten very quickly that all citizens helped fight for the freedom of Ukraine.

In this publication, we present examples of how LGBTQ+ organizations and communities in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Ukraine have contributed to supporting Ukraine's struggle for freedom. Of course, only a small part of the activities was included in the publication, but let's not stop and support Ukraine - until victory!!!

We are grateful to the LGBTQ+ communities of all countries that, despite the discrimination and injustice that exists in some countries, they actively contribute to support Ukraine.

Tolerant Youth Association

LITHUANIAN LGBTQ+ SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

When on 24 February 2022, Russia launched a military invasion of Ukraine, Lithuanian LGBTQ+ organizations and community began to gather support for Ukraine, organized and participated in rallies and events in which they sought solidarity with Ukrainians.

In the first days of the war, Lithuanian National LGBT rights organization LGL announced that it was allocating 500 Euros in support to Kyiv Pride and Kharkiv Pride activists in Ukraine. People were encouraged to donate in person. The organization shared relevant information about Ukraine, invited to help the Lithuanian Red Cross collect necessary items, clothes, shoes. All these items were sent to the people of Ukraine. On 3 March 2022, LGL announced that 34,000 Euros of support was collected in the campaign in which the organization participated, that was intended for Ukrainian LGBT activists.



3/3/2022 LGL. Facebook publication.

Tolerant Youth Association was also active. For almost a decade before the war started Association cooperated with various Ukrainian organizations. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine Tolerant Youth Association stood in solidarity with LGBTQ+ organizations, encouraged support for Ukraine by providing help independently, and actively participated in events aimed at expressing support for Ukraine and condemning Russian aggression.



27/02/2022. Photo from TJA archive.

On 3 March 2022, Association issued a statement: "We communicate with our partners and friends in Ukraine every day. We are looking for ways to help both those who fled the war and our colleagues who remained in the war zone. As far as we know, help is currently stuck due to the extremely large number of cars transporting it, so we are cooperating with Association Lygiai in order to be able to transport the largest amount of aid as efficiently as possible."

Financial support, various hygiene, medical and other means were collected.

On 3 March 2022, Tolerant Youth Association drew attention to the situation of women in Ukraine during the war. The Association called on to donate to the women, victims of war in Ukraine: "Rape and sexual abuse during war are used as a strategic, systematic and calculated weapon of war that humiliates, intimidates and terrorizes individuals, families and the entire population."



by Simona Padegimaitė.



by Simona Padegimaitė.

TJA constantly published relevant information, called for donations to the war-torn country and its people. Posters with information for the risk group refugees were prepared. People were invited to fill out a form online and inform about the help they can provide.

Jarmo.net LGBTQ+ rights news portal in Lithuania should also be mentioned. This portal published information about the situation in Ukraine and publicized the problems faced by the country's residents after Russia invaded Ukraine. It also announced about the contribution of LGBTQ+ organizations and individuals in the fight against the occupiers.

Tomaš Tomaševski

LGBTQ+ ACTIVIST FROM LITHUANIA VIOLETA TAMELYTĖ



Photo from V. Tamelytė archive.

How and when did you get the idea to volunteer in support of Ukraine?

Everything happened very naturally. I have been volunteering for 15 years. I always take it for granted that I should help others as much as I can if I have the opportunity. When the war started, I was in Great Britain, but there the opportunities to get involved in the process of helping Ukraine were limited compared to how things were going in Lithuania. Therefore, I was happy that I was able to contribute to the maximum when I returned to Lithuania. I started by collecting support, then when the opportunity arose, I transported humanitarian aid to Ukraine myself.

What campaigns have you run or contributed to?

I initiated two events during which I shared my experience of what the humanitarian aid route looks like and what the volunteers who carry the aid experience. During the events, there was an opportunity to donate money, with which I bought things needed by the soldiers. Usually, we have specific and clear requests, what exactly is needed, so the whole support process is simplified, there is no need to waste energy thinking about what is currently needed, no need to ask the Ukrainians themselves, etc. Of course, some requests take time to implement because money is not always the required resource.

I also contributed to the Christmas campaign, which was crowned by an event for children from Ukraine. A large group of Ukrainian soldiers who had come to Lithuania at that time to learn how to operate certain military devices also joined the event. I remember them smiling, very warm people and I keep wondering if they are all alive today.

Together with the Ukrainian community in Jonava, we also participated in the John's Day celebration, during which we shared stories from Ukraine, and people could buy various traditional Ukrainian handicrafts for a donation. It is always good to take part in such big celebrations and directly to feel the acceptance and support of the local community, which is a great inspiration and motivation not to stop in the difficult process of support.

There were other events that I contributed to in one way or another. The purpose of all actions was one - to educate people, share stories from the war zone, and collect support, which is no less relevant now than in the first days of the war.



Photo from V. Tamelytė archive.



Photo from V. Tamelytė archive.

You yourself went and brought support to Ukraine. Could you please share your experience?

I went to Ukraine five times with humanitarian aid. All trips were individual. The travel experiences were different and challenging.

During one trip, I had the opportunity to live among civilians for 10 days and feel the rhythm of their life. There is a lot of talk about what soldiers go through, how many of them die, but civilians also go through great hardships.

Living without electricity, heat, water is also a difficult challenge, I experienced it myself. There is constant uncertainty - whether there will be electricity, and accordingly the heat, or not. And if will be, when and for how long. It was often necessary to walk in blind darkness because there was no electricity and no street lighting. It was good that I had a flashlight and always a charged phone, but not everyone had such opportunities. Many local people had no place to charge their electronic devices, so they couldn't use their phones to light the way because had to save battery. I saw long lines of people waiting for food at Caritas tents. For many, it was the only warm meal of the day, or the only meal at all. Most often, these were people who lost their source of income or moved to a safer area from the front line, or occupied areas. A large part of these people will no longer have a place to return to, as their homes have turned into a pile of rubble.

The next four trips were to the border and the front line. The stories from there are endless. I had to walk through areas that are destroyed today, through apartment buildings that were pierced by shells and rockets. It felt like I was walking through people's broken lives. When we went to the front, Bakhmut, we transported a jeep for soldiers, which was jointly bought by the LGBT+ community and the Freedom Party. It was plastered with LGBT stickers. I carried the Pride flag with me. I still remember that feeling when I walked with the Pride flag to be signed by a Ukrainian soldier. Gunshots, artillery explosions and an earthquake. There, it was 1.5 km to the front line. The environment was extremely gloomy, cold, full of death and the will to live. I don't know if that soldier is still alive, but he gave me and the LGBT+ community a priceless gift. The Pride flag with his signature is a special symbol of freedom for me - for the freedom of all people. I will not forget these experiences, images, feelings that I had then, still have and will have forever as long as I live.

THANK YOU.



Photo from V. Tamelytė archive.

NGO WA SPHERE AND FULL-SCALE WAR: HOW WE HELP CIVILIANS AND MILITARY

Since the first days of russia's full-scale invasion, NGO WA Sphere has been actively supporting women and the LGBTQ+ community in the east of Ukraine and helping the Ukrainian military.



Photo from Sphere archive.

Foremost, a survey was conducted on the needs of LGBTQ+ people from the east of Ukraine, and based on its results, a list of the most urgent needs was formed, and further actions were planned.

Based on the needs of the community, Sphere launched psychological, humanitarian, and financial programmes to support the civilian population.



Photo from Sphere archive.



Photo from Sphere archive.

Support for Armed Forces

In the first days of the full-scale war, NGO WA Sphere took everything that could be needed from the LGBTQ+ community centre PrideHub — products, first aid kits, medicines, socks, shoes, T-shirts – and handed everything over to the Kharkiv Defense Headquarters.

During KharkivPride 2022, we raised money among the LGBTQ+ community for the charity fund Kharkiv with you for women fighting on the frontline in the Kharkiv region. We collected and transferred 102 thousand UAH to the fund. Money raised covered needs ranging from personal hygiene products to women's thermal underwear and outerwear.

We devote big raising of funds to big events, and in between, we spread the money raising of our partners, do draws for donations, and send humanitarian aid for individual requests from female members of the military.



Photo from Sphere archive.

Psychological programme

As a result of the full-scale invasion, vulnerable groups faced an even greater need for psychological support. After 24 February, a mutual support chat for LGBTQ+ and friendly people was launched, where online psychological support groups in audio format were held regularly.

The Organisation currently provides reimbursement for psychological counselling for women and the LGBTQ+ community. Also, to ease the search for friendly, tolerant, and safe female specialists, we have created a database of verified female specialists for the community. From April to September 2023, we reimbursed 667 consultations for 199 people — women and the LGBTQ+ community.

One of the activities of KharkivPride 2023 was a programme to help military members' families: parents, partners, brothers and sisters, children over 18 years old. Our specialists provided counselling to reduce emotional stress, taught self-help and showed how to support oneself and loved ones on the front line.



Photo from Sphere archive.

As part of psychosocial support, we also organise a playback theatre course, the Rainbow Reader book club, women's self-defence courses, excursions, lectures, workshops, etc.

Financial support

During the first year of the full-scale war, we launched a programme of financial assistance for LGBTQ+ people in the east of Ukraine. Targeted help was sent to those who needed food, medicine, payment for communication or urgent payment for accommodation.

Due to the programme of direct support for small business development, grants were awarded to 11 people from the LGBTQ+ community, particularly women who dared to start their own businesses, change their profession, or improve their skills.

In 2022, we attracted a total 4 144 929 UAH of aid, processed 3 726 applications, and provided assistance to more than 1 500 people.

In autumn and winter, there were frequent blackouts in Ukrainian cities due to damage to the electricity supply infrastructure caused by Russia's missile attacks. Because of this, Ukrainian women were often left without heating their own homes. It is dangerous for health at a temperature of -20 C. Therefore, we launched the Winterisation project and helped 230 women from the Kharkiv and de-occupied Luhansk and Donetsk regions. We provided insulation aids: blankets, thermoses, heaters, flashlights, sports suits for women, and supermarket certificates for household goods.

Currently, the NGO WA Sphere has projects for all support programmes. The Organisation reimburses for psychological consultations, conducts workshops with specialists, and expands the database of friendly specialists.

We also continue to help the Ukrainian military: we donate funds to CF Volonterska from selling our merchandise products. Those funds are used to support the 5th Slobozhanska Brigade of the National Guard of Ukraine.

In addition, we also continue to work with public opinion and change the city for the better — we hold educational events, organise the only offline Pride in Ukraine and create powerful informational campaigns.

In wartime, it is more important than ever to do your job — consistently and conscientiously. Sphere develops its projects and launches new ones, responding to the challenges of time and approaching our victory.

Yakiv Lavrynets

IN 2023 UKRAINIAN LGBTQ+ ACTIVIST OLENA SHEVCHENKO BECAME THE TIME WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ukrainian human rights defender, LGBTQ+ activist and head of public organization Insight Olena Shevchenko among twelve other women was named as Woman of the Year by TIME magazine in 2023.

According to the publication, during the war, Olena Shevchenko is fighting for Ukraine's most vulnerable people – representatives of the LGBT community: she buys various things that people need, including hormonal drugs.

According to the information provided by Insight, O. Shevchenko together with his colleagues collected more than 400,000 US dollars support from various donors and organized campaigns in 2022.



“Getting on this list is an important victory and recognition for Ukraine! I am proud to be on the same list as Cate Blanchett, Megan Rapinoe, Angela Bassett, and other exceptional women. I dedicate this victory to all the invisible women of Ukraine who are doing impossible things to bring our victory closer,” the activist wrote on Facebook.

O. Shevchenko is a Ukrainian public figure, human rights defender, feminist, LGBTQ+ activist, who currently heads the public organization Insight.

O. Shevchenko is also a member of the board of the international organization ILGA World and the initiator of the creation of an international network of lesbians.

In 2022, O. Shevchenko initiated the first open Feminist march in Ukraine.

jarmo.net

WHEN SHE SMILED, EVERYONE SMILED BACK

On 1 March 2022 in Kharkiv, one of the largest cities of Ukraine, an active member of the LGBTQ+ community, Elya Shchemur, who was volunteering at the Kharkiv local territorial defence office, was killed during the Russian bombardment of the city centre. She was 21 years old. KyivPride representatives were the first to announce the girl's death.

KharkivPride shared memories about Elya Shchemur and her contribution to the equality of the Ukrainian LGBTQ+ community:

Elya was an activist and a patriot: she participated in all possible actions and democratic events of Kharkiv. Together with Elya, we went through three Kharkiv Prides and three women's solidarity marches. Elya was actively engaged in human rights interventions and pride performances.

She inspired and motivated not only our team but all volunteers around. People followed her into her struggle for freedom and equality. And when she smiled, everyone smiled back. Elya was one of the first Kharkiv Pride volunteers that joined the Kharkiv defence office. She was brave and courageous. A patriot and a hero. And this is how we will remember her and never forget.



Photo from European Pride Organisers Association facebook archive.

She will not return after leaving to defend Ukraine's freedom

“We lost our friend Elya Shchemur, whom we met and, unfortunately, saw for the last time at Kharkiv Pride. We knew Elya as an activist of LGBT rights. Now we will also remember her as a territorial defence volunteer who will no longer return after leaving to defend Ukraine's freedom,” – A. Rudomanskis, chairman of the Tolerant Youth Association, sensitively wrote on his Facebook account.

jarmo.net



Photo from European Pride Organisers Association facebook archive.

VLAD FIGHTING IN THE UKRAINIAN ARMY: WHEN UNITED FOR A COMMON GOAL, NO ONE CARES WHAT IS YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Vlad Shast used to dance in his home in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, wearing a pink dress. The 27-year-old man was a stylist. But after that, his life changed completely.

Ukraine is ready to defend democracy and territorial integrity and its right to enter the Western world. The war united Ukrainians: it no longer matters what your gender, race, nationality, origin, social status, or sexual orientation is, all that is really valued now is the desire to defend your country.

Even before being drafted into the Ukrainian army, a Ukrainian belonging to the LGBTQ+ community volunteered for training in the Territorial Defence Forces of Ukraine. This knowledge is useful in the fight against the army sent by Russian President Vladimir Putin.



Jarmo. net article cover.

The Russian regime makes no attempt to hide that the LGBTQ+ community is brutally suppressed, and its rights are violated in the country. Russia has a so-called “gay propaganda” law, which prohibits the public display of content related to the LGBTQ+ community to minors. In 2017, a brutal “cleansing” of gays began in Russian-controlled Chechnya, when the power structures began to torture, imprison, and kill homosexuals. Brutal violence and genocide shocked the whole world. However, Russia continues to shock the world. The latest flashpoint is that V. Putin’s army entered Ukraine on February 24 and launched a large-scale invasion. Even before the war caused by Russia, extremely disturbing reports appeared around a special list of persons who were planned to be killed after the occupation of Ukraine. Russian officials deny the existence of this list, but it is mentioned in a letter from US representatives to the United Nations. The letter unequivocally states that the Russian power structures have compiled a list of journalists, activists, and LGBTQ+ rights defenders, against whom repression is planned - killing or deportation to concentration camps. “This is the truest human rights catastrophe”, the letter of the US representatives emphasizes.

For this reason, LGBTQ+ Ukrainians rushed to hide information about their identity, Forbes magazine writes. They spent the first days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine deleting accounts on LGBTQ+ dating platforms, purging WhatsApp messages of queer content.

As active military operations continue, many members of the LGBTQ+ community are helping the Ukrainian army. Ukrainian Territorial Defence volunteer V. Shast told Forbes that the LGBTQ+ community would be in great danger if Russia occupied Ukraine. He is currently helping the military by supplying the necessary materials. "If Russia wins, it will mean darkness. There will be no freedom and opportunity to be yourself, and various communities will lose their rights," he said.

Since the people of Ukraine began to support Western values like never before, V. Shast himself says that he does not have to hide his sexual orientation when he supports the country's defence:

"I don't have to act somehow different, pretend to be something I'm not. No one cares about my identity or sexual orientation. There is a common goal – to win and force Russian soldiers to leave our country. We act as one, each person realizes his value and responsibility. The reason for this, of course, is the desire to defend our national identity, dignity, and freedom, and to do this not only in Ukraine. Putin's attack is an attack on democracy, liberal values, which are equally important for Ukrainians and the whole world."

Before the active war in Ukraine, the situation of LGBTQ+ rights was also far from ideal. The LGBTQ+ community here has been particularly actively targeted by Ukrainian religious groups. However, the situation continued to improve during the decade: Pride marches took place, and human rights organizations were formed. Ukraine has even become a refuge for some of the LGBTQ+ people who fled from states that used repression against them.

"I know many LGBTQ+ people from Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan who moved here because of discrimination in their home countries. Ukraine has become a refuge for them, but now they may lose everything," said Ukrainian film director and founder of Ukraine Pride organization Yuriy Dvizhon.

Currently, Ukrainian LGBTQ+ organizations focus on financing the military and providing the necessary equipment.

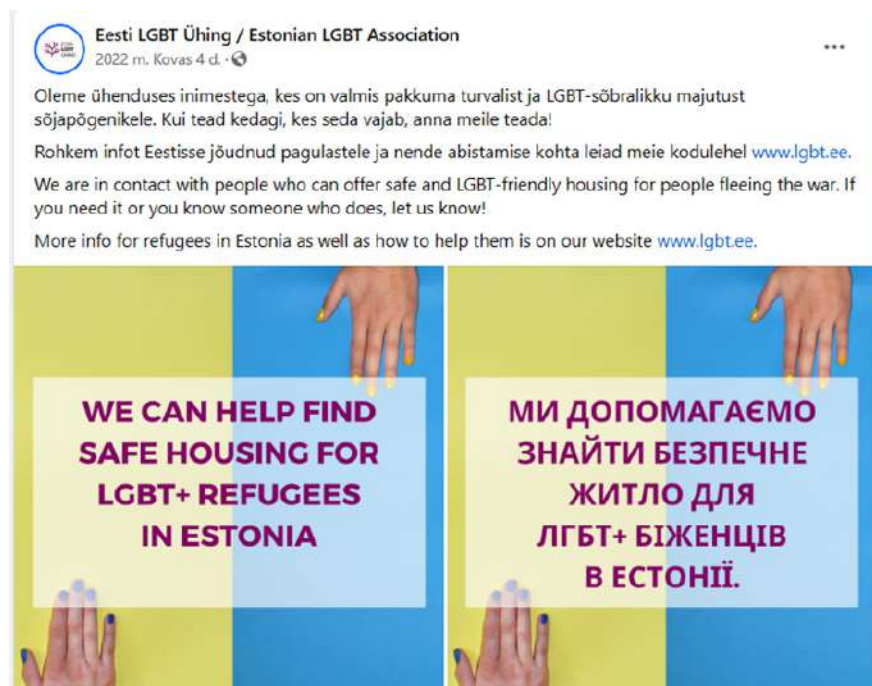
jarmo.net

ESTONIAN LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

When the war broke out in Ukraine, Estonia's LGBTQ+ community rallied to help Ukraine. Legal, material, and psychological assistance was provided. People were encouraged to donate to soldiers, refugees, pets.

One of the Estonian LGBTQ+ organizations that collects support for Ukraine and helps refugees is Eesti LGBT Ühing (Estonian LGBT Association). It is the official representative of LGBTQ+ citizens in Estonia, which focuses on informing the society about LGBTQ+ people, sexual education, and LGBTQ+ rights.

With the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Eesti LGBT Ühing announced that they are ready to offer safe and LGBTQ+ friendly housing to war refugees. Refugees could apply directly to the Association. Eesti LGBT Ühing was also looking for people who could offer LGBTQ+ war refugees safe and friendly housing.



4/3/2022 Eesti LGBT Ühing / Estonian LGBT Association facebook publication.

Eesti LGBT Ühing provided free initial psychological counselling in English, Russian and Estonian to LGBTQ+ people and their relatives. Refugees were able to talk about both specific LGBTQ+ issues and general concerns in a safe environment. If necessary, the Association could help find a psychologist or psychiatrist.



1/7/2022 Eesti LGBT Ühing / Estonian LGBT Association facebook publication.

On the 1 of July 2022 the Association announced that in June they were collecting support for the Ukrainian LGBTQ+ organization “Insight LGBTQ NGO”, which helps LGBTQ+ people fleeing war. Eesti LGBT Ühing collected financial support to provide refugees with essential hygiene items. Although the goal was to collect €1,200, a larger amount was collected – €1,673.49.

Support was collected not for once. In 2022 on Women’s Day, funds were collected for the purchase and delivery of menstrual and other hygiene items to those in need. Part of the collected support was intended for Ukrainians fleeing the war.

Tomaš Tomaševski

ASSOCIATION OF LGBT AND THEIR FRIENDS MOZAIKA

Association of LGBT and their friends Mozaika took an active role to support Ukraine after Russia’s latest invasion in February 2022, specifically supporting LGBTQ+ community in Ukraine. Mozaika created several ways for its members and supporters to act, including collecting donations and creating merchandise line to support Ukraine. Mozaika also participated very actively in coordination activities in Latvia to avoid individuals with good intentions trying to help without targeted and organised approach.

Mozaika's help focused specifically on organisations that Mozaika had already been working with, such as Kyiv Pride. Why? Instead of giving help to general humanitarian relief funds and general support to Ukraine, Mozaika chose to utilise the network of pride organisations and LGBTQ+ activists who have access to the LGBTQ+ community that may not have direct access to other sources of help. Mozaika believes that each organisation focusing on their specific field and communities can cover a wider circle of people, thus not leaving anyone behind. Most people will seek help through major humanitarian aid and various largely available, official, and organised sources of support. But there will always be marginalised communities, and individuals within those communities, for whom accessibility to these sources will be limited. Mozaika saw that pride organisations and LGBTQ+ activists in Ukraine quickly turned their work around and switched to helping those of our community who are in need and that's where Mozaika focused the support coming from LGBTQ+ community in Latvia.



Kristine Garina. Photo from Mozaika archive.

The first thing Mozaika did was launch a special product line in its merchandise range in DiversityShop.org – the online shop Mozaika runs for its own merchandise. Local artists immediately offered help, clever designs not only helped to raise funds but also raised visibility for Ukraine's support and advertised the shop itself. The designs gained a lot of popularity on social media and people kept buying, raising more and more money for Ukraine.

From simple designs of just a heart in Ukraine flag colours to more artistic approach to merch, these are some of the examples that helped to raise several thousand euros for Ukraine just via Mozaika's online shop.



Merchandise by Mozaika.

The second thing Mozaika did was organise a webinar with Kyiv Pride to inform our Latvian LGBTQ+ community what is needed and what support is important to Ukraine right now. The decision to do it was not taken lightly, considering that activists in Ukraine were quite literally under attack and their ability to answer endless questions to queer media, international organisations and partner organisations is not endless. However, considering how important it was to hear from the people on the ground, we decided to do it. The webinar was extremely helpful in creating understanding that help needs to be focused and coordinated – at that point it was not helpful to load your own car with random goods and contribute to the queue at the border. It was not always helpful to just send money. It was important to talk to the organisations receiving help in Ukraine and finding out exactly what they need.



Photo from Mozaika archive.

Trying to help Ukraine, we all found ourselves in an unusual situation where money alone could not be the solution. The things money can buy were not available in Ukraine. In cooperation with European Pride Organisers Association (who also run a fundraiser for Ukraine from the pride network in Europe), Mozaika coordinated a mission to deliver to Kyiv what was needed most – two cars that could be used to transport people and supplies to and from LGBTQ+ shelters. Using the funds raised through DiversityShop.org and using direct donations to our account, we could fund this not-so-easy operation and send queer-to-queer support from Latvia to Ukraine. Two of our colleagues went through a long journey to buy exactly the vehicle Kyiv Pride needs and delivering them to Ukraine, where they still serve their intended purpose.

Kristine Garina

POLISH LGBTQ+ SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

When the war in Ukraine started, the Polish population began to provide aid to the war-torn country on a massive scale. To this day, money is collected, essential items are sent, shelter is provided for refugees, etc. Polish LGBTQ+ organizations and the LGBTQ+ community are also actively involved in supporting Ukraine.

LGTBQ+ organizations have prepared useful sets with information where you can find all relevant information, such as organizations that help refugees, information about the situation of the LGBTQ+ community in Poland, useful tips and contacts. Since the beginning of the war, Polish LGBTQ+ organizations have collected funds for war victims, provided legal and psychological assistance, and sent support to Ukraine.

One of the organizations that actively supports Ukrainian LGBTQ+ refugees is Lambda Warszawa. It is the oldest Polish LGBTQ+ organization, founded in 1997. Lambda Warszawa provides legal and psychological assistance in Ukrainian and Russian languages, helps to get health care services, provides material support, helps to continue the travel, and provides shelter in temporary housing.



LAMBDA WARSZAWA

BAPIШABA - WARSZAWA

КОНТАКТ:
ukraina@lambdawarszawa.org
<https://forms.gle/wRqUHKkagwNPYwM8>

- Проживання, інтервенційні квартири. Zakwaterowanie. Mieszkanie interwencyjne.
- Юридична та психологічна допомога по всій Польщі (на місці та онлайн)ю Pomoc prawna i psychologiczna w całej Polsce (Warszawa + online).
- Безпечне місце для зустрічі. Bezpieczne miejsce do spotkań.
- Основні речі (ожа, одяг, ліки). Artykuły pierwszej potrzeby (jedzenie, ubrania, leki).
- Перехід. Transycja.

by ukraina.paradarownosci.eu.

A significant number of people who came to Poland after 24 February 2022, faced a sensitive problem - where to live. One of the main missions of Lambda Warszawa is to ensure the life needs of LGBTQ+ refugees from Ukraine (accommodation and funds for daily living). Some who have found shelter in private homes have been forced to look for accommodation when the period during which hosts can share their living space ends, so the organization is raising funds and renting premises to provide accommodation for refugees.

The organization also provides psychological and legal assistance. Psychological help is provided in Ukrainian. A helpline is available. A brochure on war and refugee stress has been published for both refugees and hosts.

The archive of Lambda Warszawa and the editorial staff of QueerStory collect the testimonies of non-heteronormative people from Ukraine who arrived in Poland fleeing Russian aggression after 24 February 2022. They are intended to be published and archived.



Lambda Warszawa · Follow

February 14 · 🌐

...

Relacje osób LGBTQIA+ z Ukrainy

Archiwum Lambdy Warszawa i redakcja „QueerStorii” rozpoczęły akcję zbierania relacji nieheteronormatywnych osób z Ukrainy, które po 24 lutego 2022 przyjechały do Polski, uciekając przed rosyjską agresją. Chcielibyśmy część z tych relacji wydrukować w najbliższym numerze „QueerStorii”. Ważne by napisać trochę o sobie – o życiu przed wojną, drodze do Polski. Jest to ważne świadectwo historyczne, które chcemy zachować. Relacje można spisać w języku ukraińskim, rosyjskim lub angielskim. My to przetłumaczymy na polski.

Relacje prosimy przysyłać na maila

archiwum@lambdawarszawa.org

2/14/2023. Lambda Warszawa facebook publication.

Lambda Warszawa also carries out integration activities. Smooth integration of refugees into the life of Polish society is sought. Polish language courses are organized, also members and employees of the organization learn Ukrainian. Integration and entertainment events (CV writing, ceramics workshops, etc.) are held periodically.

Another challenge that the organization helps refugees to deal with is job search. Lambda Warszawa has announced a plan to establish a place where refugees from Ukraine can work for six months by the professions, they acquired in their home country. It is announced that these people will be paid from Lambda funds, and the services they provide are free. The goal is to enable refugees not to lose their skills and gradually integrate into the Polish labour market.

Also, Lambda Warszawa maintains relations with other organizations in Ukraine. Donations and needed items are being collected and sent: portable chargers, cold-resistant sleeping bags, electric generators, etc.

Organization on 21 June 2022 announced that since the beginning of the war on 24 February 2022, 526 people used their help. These were refugees who found accommodation thanks to the organization's activities. They were given legal, psychological, and material support. At that time, the youngest person using assistance was 17 years old, the oldest was 65 years old. The organization also announced that since the beginning of March, Lambda Warszawa has spent 285,054.87 PLN on activities related to refugee support. A large part of this expenditure was spent on emergency aid, housing rent, food, and clothing.

Another LGBTQ+ organization that helps refugees is Kampania Przeciw Homofobii. It is a nationwide non-governmental organization established in 2001. After the start of the war in Ukraine, the organization created a database of residential premises. Accommodation is provided to people who are looking for a safe place to stay. Kampania Przeciw Homofobii also has a refugee community centre. It is a safe space where you can spend time with the LGBTQ+ community, use the Internet, electricity, a bathroom with a shower, and drink coffee or tea. The community centre is located in Warsaw.

Kampania Przeciw Homofobii founded the Rainbow Beyond Borders Foundation. The purpose of the fund is to support the aid activities of Polish and Ukrainian organizations and informal groups aimed at LGBTQ+ refugees, their families and relatives in both Poland and Ukraine.



7/4/2022 Kampania Przeciw Homofobii twitter publication.

It is also worth noting that after the start of the war, the organization Stonewall Group supplemented its aid offers with safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community. The organization has created a form where you can report the possibility of providing free shelter, as well as report the need for accommodation.

These are just a few examples of how the Polish LGBTQ+ community and organizations have contributed to support Ukraine.

The following organizations or initiatives should also be mentioned: Queer Solidarnie, Fundacji Kohezja, Fundacja Wrzenie, Queer Tour, which also contributed by providing support to Ukraine.

Tomaš Tomaševski

**АНГЛІЙСЬКА
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