



## TAKING A BREAK FROM THE WAR

The war is a cruel reality for the people of Ukraine. The Robert Bosch Stiftung has created a special budget to provide funding for a variety of **aid projects** – including one that organizes vacations for children.

**H**ow can we help people in Ukraine who are affected by the war? In April 2022, Benjamin Abtan, a French policy advisor and organizational consultant asked local authorities what they needed. It turned out they were not looking for help with resettling refugees. What Abtan discovered was that people needed a way to give children a break from the war. Since then, he has been organizing the “Europe Prykhystok” initiative (“prykhystok” means refuge or shelter) with the support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The initiative offers Ukrainian children and young

people the opportunity to take a vacation in another country. The project fields requests from Ukraine and sends them to local partners in France. (Other European countries are to be added soon.) Some 260 children from Lviv, Khmelnytskyi, and Cherkasy, accompanied by about 40 adults, were able to have vacations at 15 locations in France last summer. For the families, these were a great relief. “The children can draw strength from the vacations, which give them the tools to keep from falling to pieces. The project has an enormous impact on a human level,” says Abtan.

Europe Prykhystok applies an innovative approach in its work, because there is an untapped potential for local actors to mobilize and cooperate across national borders in times of war. The system of cross-border European cooperation developed under the program will continue to protect people displaced by wars around the world by brokering new and evolving partnerships with local actors. The project was recently selected for an award by the Paris Peace Forum, an organization that honors projects offering concrete and efficient solutions to global challenges.



Whether **cycling in Montpellier** (left) or **go-karting in Tomblaine** – the Europe Prykhystok initiative offers orphans and children from poor families in Ukraine a few weeks of respite in France, far away from the horrors of war.

PHOTOS: SOFIA LYSCHYNSKA, NATALIA NAKONECHNA; ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES/CREATIVE TOUCH

**EMERGENCY RELIEF IN UKRAINE** Europe Prykhystok is one of nearly 40 projects that have received assistance from the Stiftung’s emergency relief budget since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine (see *How the Stiftung helps*). Initially, the Stiftung focused on providing immediate help to local partners with whom it had worked intensively for many years. “In the future, we want to think strategically about how to help Ukraine rebuild over the longer term,” says Ottilie Bälz, Senior Vice President Global Issues and coordinator of the Stiftung’s Ukraine engagement. She

adds that funding for Ukraine will not come at the expense of the Stiftung’s three focus areas of health, education, and global issues. No compromises will have to be made in other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Ukrainians who have fled to Germany also benefit from the support of the Immigration Society and Education teams, which work to promote equal participation and equal opportunities. “Peace and stability, especially in Europe, were primary concerns for our founder Robert Bosch. We remain committed to this legacy today,” says Bernhard Straub, CEO of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. [▶ Claudia Hagen](#)



## How the Stiftung helps out

### 8.5

MILLION EUROS

The amount the foundation has provided for its commitment to Ukraine since 2022.

### 42

PROJECTS

have so far received funding from the special budget.

The extensive array of projects in which the Stiftung is involved ranges from safety measures and the delivery of medical supplies and psychological first aid to working with refugee students and teachers in Germany. This year, one priority of the funding is to build lasting integration mechanisms for Ukrainians who have been displaced in their homeland or outside the country. The Stiftung is also working with a network of Ukrainian mediation organizations to address the question of how society can come back together again following the war. In addition, the Stiftung is promoting the documentation of the war through archiving and processing reports and documentation provided by scholars, journalists, artists, and many others currently living in Ukraine.