



MALTESER AID SLOVAKIA

ACTIVITIES 2022

CONTENT

WE CANNOT LET THE SOLIDARITY ABATE	1
HELPING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES	2
AID AT THE SLOVAK-UKRAINIAN BORDER	3
HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN PRACTICE	5
STORIES FROM THE BORDER	7
"EVERY MOMENT AT THE BORDER WAS VERY INTENSE"	8
HUMANITARIAN AID FOR THE VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE	9
"YOUR HELP BRINGS LIGHT AND JOY INTO THE HEARTS OF OUR PEOPLE!" SAYS UKRAINIAN PRIEST	11
HOUSING FOR UKRAINIAN MOTHERS AND CHILDREN AND FOOD FOR THE NEEDY	14
THE WAVE OF SOLIDARITY	15
PERMANENT PROJECTS	16
THE PERMANENT SUPPORT FOR OUR ELDERLY	17
THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IS GROWING. AND WE ARE HERE FOR THEM.	18
THE 64-TH INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA TO LOURDES	19
ASSISTANCE DURING THE MASS RELIGIOUS EVENTS	21
MALTACAMP 2022 - AN UNFORGETTABLE WEEK IN ROME	23
THE MOST VALUABLE FRIENDSHIPS	24
RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY CENTRE IS WELL UNDER WAY	25
WE ARE WHERE THEY NEEDED US	26
THANK YOU FOR THE RECOGNITION OF OUR VOLUNTEER WORK	27
PARTNERS	28
DO YOU WANT TO HELP?	29
ABOUT US	30

WE CANNOT LET THE SOLIDARITY ABATE

Dear volunteers, dear friends,

After two years marked by the pandemic, we expected things to return to normality, or, at least close to it. However, when the conflict in Ukraine escalated on February 24th, it was clear to us that we had a difficult yet important task ahead of us - to help the people in need. Looking back, year 2022 was the most intense year for Malteser Aid Slovakia in our history.

I am very proud that we were able to alleviate people's suffering at least partially, thanks to you, our volunteers, partners and supporters. We started our service at the Slovak-Ukrainian border in Vyšné Nemecké on the second day after the war broke out, where we directly helped tens of thousands of refugees. Going forward, we expanded our help and provided the housing for Ukrainian mothers with children in Slovakia, food vouchers for Ukrainian elderly and the disabled, and secured direct imports of humanitarian aid for vulnerable and marginalised communities in western Ukraine.

We, of course, continued with our long-term projects. In 2022, we distributed more than 25 thousand lunches to the elderly - daily, directly to their homes. We also served more than 18 thousand hot meals to homeless people. Our volunteers spent countless hours making unforgettable experiences for young people with disabilities who would otherwise be among the "forgotten".

Together with our volunteers, disabled, and pilgrims, we participated in the 64th International Pilgrimage of the Order of Malta to Lourdes. We secured a much needed spiritual support for the dozens of sick people we cared for each day. Traditionally, we also helped at mass religious events in Bratislava, Nitra and Šaštín. Our charity stalls at the Christmas markets in Bratislava and Nitra welcomed hundreds of homeless people. The reconstruction of the Community Centre in Topoľčany, that will welcome the first Roma children in spring 2023, is also well under way.

Dear all, many of us are tired. Covid, followed by the war and the economic crisis are making us all uncertain and anxious. The wide-spread frustration often turns against those who should be at the forefront of our attention.

In spite such circumstances, I would like to encourage you. Together, even in these difficult times, we can be a sign of hope and kindness to those in need. In the same way, they will be a symbol of love and compassion for us.

Dear friends, once again, on behalf of Malteser Aid Slovakia and all those we help, I thank you sincerely for your courage, generosity and sacrifice.

I wish you a Happy New Year 2023 and look forward to future cooperation.

JUDr. Július Brichta
President
Malteser Aid Slovakia

HELPING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES



AID AT THE SLOVAK-UKRAINIAN BORDER

Malteser Aid Slovakia was **one of the first organisations providing aid to people fleeing the war in Ukraine** at the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossing Vyšné Nemecké.

Our volunteers were at the border on the **25th of February 2022**, the second day after the outbreak of war. The help offered **24/7 included medical, social and psychological assistance** to all incoming refugees. **More than 200 volunteers** from Malteser Aid Slovakia and its sister organisations served in **72-hour shifts** for several months. A heartfelt appreciation also goes to our Order of Malta family from Slovenia and the Czech Republic, that came to help us directly at the border.

Hundreds of thousands of refreshments, snacks, hot drinks and water were distributed by the Malteser Aid. We also provided **countless toys for the children, blankets and warm clothes** to those arriving. After the start of the war (before this service was taken over by the state after a couple of weeks), we also **coordinated transport and accommodation for thousands of refugees** who arrived at this border crossing, where temperatures reached minus 20 degrees Celsius at night. We also operated a field chapel right in the border area. This converted and heated tent also served as a waiting room for mothers and children in case of bad weather; and as a spiritual refuge for those who were grateful to have made it to safety.

After the months of war and after the situation at the border have become relatively stable, Malteser Aid Slovakia remains one of the few organisations still present at the border crossing in Vyšné Nemecké. We are also one of the eleven organisations that **signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in dealing with the emergency situation related to the arrival of a large number of people from Ukraine on the Slovak territory with the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic**. Currently, we have several containers where the refugees can warm up, eat or get the necessary information and support right after the arrival. Our staff and volunteers are present at the border on a daily basis, **ready to provide assistance to all those seeking safety**.

RESULTS



MORE THAN 200 VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE



DIRECT AID TO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE



MORE THAN 150 THOUSAND FOOD PACKAGES DISTRIBUTED



HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN PRACTICE

Tens of thousands of volunteers and professionals from the Order of Malta work worldwide in the first line, alleviating the suffering caused by the natural disasters and wars. We talked to the Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the Slovak Republic, H.E. Dr. Alfred Prinz von Schönburg-Hartenstein, about the importance of direct help and assistance to the people impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Your Excellency, since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, together with your wife, you volunteered several times at the Slovak-Ukrainian border. What motivated you the most to help directly and what were your first impressions at the border?

As a Christian it goes without saying that it must be our calling to help those in need, and as the second female Nobel laureate and novelist Bertha von Suttner rightfully said: “Besides the word loving, helping is the world's most beautiful verb.” Hence, as a member of the Order it becomes natural for us to go there where distress and hardship requires us to provide relief and assistance. When my wife and I first came to the border, we witnessed with a heavy heart the masses of people who surged towards Slovakia to escape from this cruel warfare. However,

it was quite comforting at the same time to see the dozens of motivated volunteers who provided the most diverse aid services under the banner and flag of the Order of Malta.



What were the most memorable moments at the Slovak-Ukrainian border?

What struck us the most were the sea of tears which the people had in their eyes once they crossed the border line and seemed to realize that they and their accompanying loved ones are finally safe. On the other hand, when talking to the arriving you realized very quickly the deep sadness about what they had to leave behind – in most cases their male family members who had to stay in the country to defend their soil. The grief and shock was also very visible in the arriving children's faces and these were impressions which we all will not forget.



PHOTO: Princess Marie-Therese von Schönburg-Hartenstein helping at the border in Vysne Nemecke

The years long tight collaboration between the Order's embassy in Slovakia and the Order's Slovak relief organisation is rather unique. What are the main priorities of the Order's diplomatic mission in Slovakia?

The main duty of our Embassy is to represent the Government of the Sovereign Order of Malta towards the representatives of the Slovak Republic and to put humanitarian diplomacy into practice. Humanitarian diplomacy for us means, utilising different diplomatic channels and networks to actively support the Order's many global charitable projects and to work directly in the field, by providing - in many cases - lifesaving relief services exactly there where they are immediately needed. The year 2023 marks a very important milestone for the Order, since we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of having mutual bilateral diplomatic relations between the Sovereign Order of Malta and the Slovak Republic. Consequently, it is our constant effort to strengthen and even expand our strong ties with the Slovak people!



PHOTO: The Ambassador and the Slovak Prime Minister Eduard Heger at the border crossing in Vysne Nemecke

THE STRENGTH LIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Since the first days of the war, our sister organisations within the Order have been proactively looking for various ways to assist us in helping the people affected by the war in Ukraine. For example, **Malteser International**, the Order's humanitarian intervention organisation, **secured resources** from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany as part of a larger project to help people affected by the war in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries.

Furthermore, Malteser International also **helped us on a professional and personal level**. **The Order of Malta in France** and **The Global Fund for Forgotten People**, a worldwide foundation supporting the works of the Order of Malta, also helped us financially. Sister organisations from other countries also helped us on the ground - highly-skilled volunteers came from the **Czech Republic, Slovenia, Austria, and Germany**.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank Order of Malta family for all the help and support.

STORIES FROM THE BORDER

FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES MET WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS

On Sunday, May 8th, 2022, JUDr. Július Brichta, the President of Malteser Aid Slovakia, welcomed Dr. Jill Biden, the first lady of the United States of America, at the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossing in Vyšné Nemecké.

During a brief discussion, we told her about the humanitarian, medical and social assistance, that the Order of Malta and its volunteers provide to Ukrainian refugees in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries. Together with the First Lady, we held a Sunday prayer in the field chapel of the Malteser Aid. The tent also served as a refuge for Ukrainian mothers and children, especially during cold nights.

We thank the First Lady for her encouragement and support in our service to those in need.



THE BOY RECOGNISED BY THE WHOLE WORLD

On the night of the 6th of March 2022, 11-year-old Hassan passed through the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossing Vyšné Nemecké. He had only his passport, one plastic bag and a phone number written on his hand. His journey was more than a thousand kilometers long and he went all by himself. His mother, who takes care of an immobile grandmother, had to stay in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the father was already deceased.

Our volunteers welcomed him, gave him food, hot cocoa and let him warm up in our tent. In the meantime, we managed to get in touch with his siblings who are studying in Bratislava.

The story of little Hassan flew around the world and was covered by the most renowned media. This little boy became a symbol of heroism and sacrifice of the people of Ukraine. We are grateful to be able to help Hassan and many others get to safety.

"EVERY MOMENT AT THE BORDER WAS VERY INTENSE"

Our volunteer Anna Kollárová, a medical student, was one of the first to be helping at the Slovak-Ukrainian border in Vyšné Nemecké. She told us about her first days in the service and about the impressions and experiences she had.

What encouraged you to make the decision to go and help the refugees at the border immediately after the war broke out?

When I heard about the war in Ukraine breaking out, I felt horrified and helpless, and at the same time I knew I wanted to help. I had been a volunteer of Malteser Aid for several years, and when the opportunity arose to go to the border with this organisation and provide actual help where it was needed, I didn't hesitate.



Weren't you scared?

I guess subconsciously I was a little bit, but I didn't admit it because I knew I was more worried about those who were on the other side of the Ukrainian-Slovakian border.

What were your first impressions?

We arrived at the border on the second day of the war. At that time, the aid to the refugees on the site was not yet very well organised. However, thanks to the deployment of the armed forces and other non-profit organisations and volunteers, the situation quickly improved and our assistance was of considerable use. Across the border, mothers with children and the elderly were coming to us. Mothers, who tried not to show their despair and helplessness, so that their children would feel safe and have hope for a better future. Even though they probably did not believe it themselves. It was very cold at that time, the babies and the elderly were the most affected, we always tried to give them warm drinks, blankets, and warm them up in the tent.

Could you tell us more about the service itself?

In order to be effective, we divided ourselves in teams and each team was focused on something else. In our tent we provided food, drinks, hygiene items in one section. In the other section, there was a team that organised transportation from the border and temporary accommodation for those who had nowhere to go.

What was the most intense moment for you?

I can't think of one particular experience, every moment at the border was very intense. With every family that suddenly found itself without a father outside their home, I felt very sorry for them all. When people from all over the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, France came and brought us truckloads of humanitarian aid and were willing to stay with us at the border and help, it was also very moving.

HUMANITARIAN AID FOR THE VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE

Malteser Aid Slovakia, in cooperation with the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Development of the Roma Community and the Consul General of the Slovak Republic in Uzhhorod, launched in May 2022 a **regular supply of humanitarian aid** for the socially vulnerable and marginalised groups in Ukraine.

The elderly, orphans, the Roma population and many others suffer from urgent shortages of essential food and hygiene items. The distribution of humanitarian aid from centrally managed warehouses often fails to reach the people who need it the most. In order to ensure that deliveries address real needs and to avoid possible abuse or mismanagement, Malteser Aid Slovakia cooperates with the City Council of Uzhhorod and Zakarpattia Oblast, local authorities, the Church, and representatives of the Roma community. They prepare specific lists of the humanitarian aid needed and then **ensure its distribution to the people in need.**

In 2022, **a total of 22 deliveries of humanitarian aid amounting to more than 100 tons** were made. We regularly supply six municipalities and, in cooperation with the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic, we made a special delivery of humanitarian aid to the village of Petrove in the Kirovohrad region in December 2022. Generators, food, clothing, hygiene and disinfectants, blankets, sleeping bags and mattresses were distributed among 1,250 displaced people from the most affected areas of Ukraine (including 350 children) and among other people in need.

OUTCOMES



A TOTAL OF 22 TRUCKS OF HUMANITARIAN AID DELIVERED



MORE THAN 100 TONS OF BASIC UTILITIES FOR THE DISPLACED



REGULAR SUPPLY FOR 6 MUNICIPALITIES IN THE "ZAKARPATTIA OBLAST" AND FOR EASTERN UKRAINE



“YOUR HELP BRINGS LIGHT AND JOY INTO THE HEARTS OF OUR PEOPLE!” SAYS UKRAINIAN PRIEST

Our aid for Ukraine would not be possible without the dedicated individuals we work with right in the country. We talked to them about our cooperation so far and the current situation in Ukraine.

What was the status of available humanitarian aid before our partnership? What problems were you facing?

Father Sergei, Veľké Berezné: Before we started cooperation with Malteser Aid Slovakia, we had difficulties with humanitarian aid, namely with food.

Sister Jozica, Turie Remety: Before we started working with Malteser Aid Slovakia, humanitarian aid was brought to us several times from Slovenia from different parishes. But the most crucial was the help we received from you. You provided us with exactly what we lacked, especially basic foodstuffs (rice, sugar, oil, pasta, cereals). The people were very grateful because it was exactly what they needed the most.

Mr Michal, Svalyava: The situation here was difficult. Our organisation, the Church of the Living God, did not receive any humanitarian aid, despite the fact that we received 32 internally displaced persons from Kiev or Kharkiv. Before we started working with you, all we received was clothes and blankets for the refugees from one gentleman.

Father Ivan, Seredne: We, Nazareth Children's Orphanage, did not receive help from any charities. You, Malteser Aid Slovakia, were the first one to provide us with humanitarian aid and especially food! Father Francis from Slovakia is now also helping us as our friend. The parish of Seredne and Seredne-Ivanovtsi (Roma) did not receive any help either. You are the first who volunteered to do this without making any distinctions. However, the problem remains that it is still impossible to help everyone. Job difficulties, unstable or none electricity, the winter and financial hardship due to the war lead to people being very cold and hungry.



Who receives the humanitarian aid?

Father Sergei, Veľké Berezné: The humanitarian aid is intended for the Roma community in Veľké Berezné, where 3000 Roma live, and also for the people who fled the war in eastern Ukraine and who now live with us.

Sister Jozica, Turie Remety: The aid is primarily directed to refugees who live in our village, but also in neighbouring municipalities. Our friend, Father Anatoly, comes to us from Odessa and takes some of the essential items to the cities of eastern Ukraine where he distributes them to the people living in the cities and villages that have been liberated from occupation. This means that it is not only Zakarpattia that receives humanitarian aid, but also other eastern regions of Ukraine. We will call him, he will come and deliver to the people.



Mr. Michal, Svalyava: The support is primarily intended for socially vulnerable families with several children, from 3 to 8 children.

Father Ivan, Seredne: Humanitarian aid from you is directed exclusively to orphans, the elderly, refugees and their families, Roma, widows and the children whose breadwinners have died.

How do you select the recipients of this aid?

Father Sergei, Veľké Berezné: We distribute aid to Roma families who go to our church and to poor families with multiple children go to school.

Sister Jozica, Turie Remety: Humanitarian aid is only given to people who do not have enough money and cannot provide for themselves. Those who have money don't receive humanitarian aid. This means that refugees who have just arrived and have no housing, no work and no money, as well as large socially vulnerable families are receiving aid. For example, there are families where there is a grandfather, a mother and 5 children, but the father is not there because, for example, he is fighting or has died...

Mr. Michal, Svalyava: Humanitarian aid is given to socially vulnerable people, whom we know, for example, from the church. At the same time, we go to different villages, see how people live and determine who needs our help the most.

Father Ivan, Seredne: Me, as their priest, know every family and the problem they have. There is a time when, as a chaplain, I go to the war and take food packages for the people from the frontline zone. The parish community of Mothers in Prayer and the Women of the Living Rosary also help me. We write the lists of needs together and deliver the packages to the houses.

How do people respond to the humanitarian aid supplies?

Father Sergei, Veľké Berezné: The Roma are very grateful for the aid. They are very grateful for the support, because they live below the poverty line and on the edge of survival. The refugees are very grateful because food in Ukraine is quite expensive, and humanitarian aid helps them financially a lot.

Sister Josica, Turie Remety: All the people are very grateful. Words cannot express how happy they are. How many tears we have seen... but they were tears of joy. They all wish God's blessings on all who help them. They are grateful for everything, absolutely everything.

Mr. Michal, Svalyava: Honestly, when we distributed the food that you kindly sent to us among the people, we were pleasantly surprised how grateful the people were. And even those who have nothing to do with the church.

Father Ivan, Seredne: With joy and sorrow! They would like to help themselves, but they have nothing to help from. But they gladly accept this humanitarian aid and share vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, or onions. Together we cook dinners for those who need it the most.

Do you recall any happy moments related to the humanitarian deliveries?

Father Sergei, Veľké Berezné: Many of the Roma families cried with joy when I distributed humanitarian aid to them. They are very glad that someone is helping them.

Sestra Jozica, Turie Remety: People often say that they brought them exactly what they needed. "It's like someone knew and sensed that this is exactly what I need." People are very happy, they cry. On one hand, they are happy about material things, they are happy that we brought them food and other things. On the other hand, they are so pleased that they are still remembered, that they have not been forgotten. This joy is more spiritual and psychological. They understand that someone cares about them, thinks about them and that someone needs them.

Mr. Michal, Svalyava: I think their joy and gratitude is best captured in the photos.

Father Ivan, Seredne: It feels very good, when I can see a full person, even in a cold house. In the village of Zaliznychne in Zaporozhye region, I brought food packages for seven families who stayed. I found one woman who was locked in the house, her son had gone somewhere, I gave her what I had. She was eating dry pasta right in front of me, how awful, but real! I am not looking for happy moments, I believe and know that your help brings light and joy to their hearts!!!



HOUSING FOR UKRAINIAN MOTHERS AND CHILDREN AND FOOD FOR THOSE IN NEED

In the first days after the war started, Malteser Aid Slovakia, in cooperation with the Slovak Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Caritas Slovakia, **set up a registration system of available housing capacities**. Thousands of vacant rooms, houses and apartments, that the Slovaks decided to provide free of charge to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, were registered in the system. This system **played a key role for those who had nowhere to go** after crossing the Slovak border. At the same time, it ensured that many had enough time to get back on their feet.

In June 2022, Malteser Aid Slovakia started operating **its own housing facilities for Ukrainian mothers with children from the socially underprivileged backgrounds**. Currently, we run **four such establishments, where we care for over 160 women with children**. In addition to shelter, we also provide the necessary assistance for integration into society, including help with the administration or finding a job. Our volunteers also organise leisure activities for the children - trips to the zoo, pizza evenings and Christmas parties.

In the fall, we also started **the distribution of food vouchers to the Ukrainian elderly over 65 years and the people with disabilities**. It is these groups who find themselves in a very difficult situation as they are unable to find the job in Slovakia. We distribute the vouchers every Tuesday in Bratislava in cooperation with the University of St. Elizabeth. **We regularly help around 300 people, providing around 10 thousand meals a month**.



THE WAVE OF SOLIDARITY

The war in Ukraine and the suffering of millions of people resulted in a huge wave of solidarity. People were willing to help directly in the field, donate toys, clothes, a place to sleep. Others prepared a hot meal for the refugees waiting for hours in the blistering cold. Many people also decided to help financially.

After the outbreak of war, Malteser Aid Slovakia organised a **public fundraiser** where people could donate to help the Ukrainians. **Thanks to your generosity, we managed to raise more than 80 thousand euro in this local campaign to help the refugees** seeking safe haven in Slovakia, but also those who were forced to stay in Ukraine.

The Archdiocese of Košice, under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic, Ms. Zuzana Čaputová, organised a charity concert, that was broadcasted by the Slovak national television. The proceeds supported our relief efforts for the people of Ukraine. Another benefit concert for Ukraine was also organised by the Bishop of Nitra in cooperation with our volunteers.

Thank you for your kindness and the support of our efforts.



PERMANENT PROJECTS



THE PERMANENT SUPPORT FOR OUR ELDERLY

For more than 5 years, every workday, our volunteers have been delivering lunches to the elderly in Bratislava who, due to their health or financial situation, are unable to secure at least one hot meal a day. **Every day we visit more than 130 households, and many times we are the only company these people have.**

Three crews - each one consisting of a chauffeur and a volunteer - **spend 251 days a year on the road and distribute more than 25 thousand lunches.** To the pre-packed lunches, that contain soup and the main dish, we regularly add a little gift, particularly during the holidays or for the St. Nicholas Day and the International Women's Day. Our volunteers also always include kind words and a smile, that are often the most valuable part of the service.

Due to the demographic development of the population and the deteriorating economic situation, we plan to expand the food delivery project.



THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IS GROWING. AND WE ARE HERE FOR THEM.

We started the soup kitchen for the homeless in 2017, initially only during the winter months. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have expanded the project and now we distribute **hot lunches regularly and all year round in Bratislava, Nitra and Trenčín**. Due to deteriorating economic situation of many, we are seeing an increase in the number of people dependent on this service.

We regularly provide hot food for over **200 homeless people, and since the beginning of 2020, we have distributed almost 40 thousand lunches**. Lunches are served every Wednesday and Sunday between 12 and 13 o'clock in front of St. Elizabeth's Church on Špitálská Street in Bratislava. Regular soup kitchen also takes place in Nitra and Trenčín.

In addition to a warm lunch, the homeless also receive **clothes, hats, socks, and gloves**, that are crucial during the winter season. For the holidays (Easter and Christmas), as well as on St. Nicholas Day, we do not forget to add chocolate or other sweets. After all, many of homeless people get the chance to enjoy sweets only a couple of times a year.

However, in addition to food, we also try to give them a **smile and attention**. That's why our volunteers in Trenčín decided to organise **an autumn barbecue for the homeless people**. In addition to various meats, they also enjoyed pleasant conversations and helped the nature by collecting several bags of garbage. For those who are mostly overlooked by the society, this kind of event and friendliness is truly valuable.



THE 64-TH INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA TO LOURDES

After the Covid pandemic, **189 volunteers, the sick and pilgrims** met at the Bratislava airport at 6.00 am on the 29th of April 2022 and left for Lourdes. Following the two-hour flight, the pilgrimage started with a welcome Mass, a guided tour of the Lourdes sanctuary, a joint candle offering and the traditional evening Marian procession.

During the **four-day pilgrimage**, those present had a very diverse program. **The second day** began with a morning Mass in the Basilica of the Rosary, during which our "malades" received the anointing of the sick. This was followed by a visit to the nearby historic town of Tarbes and a tour of Lourdes in the footsteps of Saint Bernadette. The day was concluded with the International Eucharistic Procession, attended by thousands of pilgrims and delegations from nearly 30 countries.



The **third day** began with an international Mass attended by nearly 3,000 members of the Order, volunteers and sick pilgrims in the underground Basilica of St. Pius X. All of them gathered in Lourdes to strengthen the Order of Malta's family, to serve and to bring hope and relief to the sick. The afternoon was followed by the Stations of the Cross and the presentation of commemorative medals and gifts to the sick pilgrims. Their bravery and optimism are a great inspiration to us.

On the **final day** of the pilgrimage we celebrated the final Mass at 6.00 a.m. right in the Lourdes Grotto. Despite the early morning hour and the rainy weather, it was an experience of a lifetime for many pilgrims. The final day of the pilgrimage continued with a free programme of walks, tapping the Lourdes water and souvenir shopping until the afternoon flight back to Bratislava.

During the whole pilgrimage, those who could not physically participate were present with us in prayers and intentions they sent with us to Lourdes. These were presented to Our Lady of Lourdes at the end of the pilgrimage by the chaplain of the Order of Malta in Slovakia, Msgr. Tibor Hajdu.

Since 1958, members of the Order of Malta and volunteers of its OMROs from all over the world have been organising their pilgrimage to Lourdes. Every year on the first weekend in May, they gather in a small town under the Pyrenees and bring with them the sick, many of whom are immobile. They are lovingly cared for, nursed and accompanied throughout the pilgrimage, so that they can find strength in their suffering.



ASSISTANCE DURING THE MASS RELIGIOUS EVENTS

The volunteers of Malteser Aid Slovakia have traditionally been part of many major church events in Bratislava and Nitra. We regularly help to manage the crowd, provide water and first aid. This year was no different.

The service during the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi in Bratislava and Nitra.

On Sunday, June 19, 2022, dozens of our members and volunteers participated in active service during the celebration of the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ in Bratislava and Nitra. The volunteers provided first aid to the participants of these celebrations and assisted the organisers with support activities in coordinating the festivities and processions through the cities. Due to the hot weather, we distributed thousands of glasses of water (and smiles) to the participants of the celebrations. At the end of the celebration, which was also attended by the Ambassador of the Order of Malta in the Slovak Republic, H.E. Dr. Alfred Prinz von Schönburg-Hartenstein, the Archbishop of Bratislava, Msgr. Stanislav Zvolenský thanked our volunteers for their selfless service that they perform every year during these celebrations.

National Pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows - Šaštín 2022

Malteser Aid Slovakia has traditionally participated in the National Pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, which takes place annually on 15 September in Šaštín. Our volunteers secured the water distribution and were in charge of the sector for handicapped pilgrims. They also assisted with the crowd management, navigated the participants and ensured the emergency corridors remained clear. Malteser Aid also had a tent on site with paramedics and a doctor. During the Holy Mass, our emergency response team assisted several pilgrims.





MALTACAMP 2022 - AN UNFORGETTABLE WEEK IN ROME

After a three-year break caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, 22 members of the Slovak delegation joined the International Summer Camp for Young People with Disabilities – Malta Camp 2022. Starting on July 30th, 2022, the event took place in the monastery of San Vincenzo Maritre in Rome.

Dozens of young volunteers of the Order of Malta dedicated a week of summer holidays to care for disabled young people from all over the world. The volunteers made sure to prepare a week full of exciting activities.

They organised themed parties, talent shows and a magic show; enjoyed national dishes, played sports or board games. The participants visited Vatican and attended the Holy Mass in the Cathedral of St. Peter. They also visited Castel Gandolfo, also known as the Pope's summer residence, saw Roman monuments, including the Colosseum and the Pantheon, and enjoyed a day on the beach.

Since 1983, members and volunteers of the Order of Malta have been hosting Malta Camp every year. More than 500 young volunteers between the ages of 18 and 35 from all over the world welcome guests with physical or intellectual disabilities. During one week in summer, they live together, meet new people, and share exceptional experiences. The guests, i.e., young people with disabilities, receive 24-hour care from the volunteers of same age and create lifelong friendships.



THE MOST VALUABLE FRIENDSHIPS

The youth group of Malteser Aid Slovakia regularly organises meetings with the young people with disabilities, that are mostly held at the headquarters of our organisation on Jakubovo square in Bratislava.

On average, **the youngsters meet twice a month**. When the weather is nice, they enjoy barbecues with lots of delicious food, talking, singing, and dancing. When the weather is not that pleasant, the gatherings are moved inside, where table football, board games, a projector and karaoke are available. Young volunteers make sure that they always celebrate the birthdays of their handicapped friends. They also call them regularly and individually take them for coffee or tea.

These meetings are key to strengthening friendly relations and building a resilient community. For young people with disabilities, it is important to spend time with their peers, with whom they can create wonderful memories.



RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY CENTRE IS WELL UNDER WAY

The reconstruction of the centre in Topolčany is in a full swing - the preparatory and cleaning works, with which the local Roma helped us, were finalised in the first half of 2022. Several essential building works were already finalised. The roof was repaired, as well as the right wing of the building. The ground floor was fully reconstructed, and the furnishings is under way. **The launch of the first phase of the centre's operations and its opening is scheduled for the end of the first quarter of 2023.** As part of the first stage, we plan to offer after-school tutoring of pupils, leisure activities and mentoring for children, a program for young mothers and a social intervention aimed at children. We expect the completion of the centre in 2024, when the building will be also available for other purposes that will help us finance the long-term operations.

The main objective of The Malteser Aid Slovakia is not only the reconstruction but the long-term operation of the centre aiming for the Roma integration and intercultural dialogue. The establishment and operation of community centres is one of the effective options for helping marginalised Roma communities. **"Integration is not assimilation, it is important that communities keep their culture alive,"** says **H.E. Franz Salm-Reifferscheidt, Ambassador of the Order of Malta et large to Roma People**, who is also one of the main sponsors of the project. The project also enjoys the support of the Global Fund for Forgotten People and the Government of the Slovak Republic.

We recognise a strong need for such project in the Topolčany area - near the community centre, on the outskirts of the residential zone, many Roma live in complicated conditions, and more than half of this community are children.

The Order of Malta already operates 22 Roma community centres in 8 Central and Eastern European countries. In Slovakia, we helped to built the first community centre in Orechov dvor near Nitra in cooperation with the city of Nitra in 2014, and the second one is currently being built in Topolčany.



WE ARE WHERE THEY NEEDED US

In addition to our long-term projects, the volunteers have been actively involved in various other activities during this year:

- **Clothing Collections:** we have organised **several collections** of clothing for the homeless people. For the needs of humanitarian transports to Ukraine, the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic also organized a collection of winter clothing, that we received from its management before Christmas.
- **Charity Christmas Punch:** after the Covid break, we finally organised **the Charity Maltese Punch in Bratislava and Nitra**. Visitors were able to have Christmas drinks, cakes and could make a voluntary donation to support the projects of Malteser Aid Slovakia. For the duration of the Christmas markets, **our volunteers provided hot drinks and snacks for hundreds of people in need and the homeless people**.
- **Hospice Assistance:** we supported the activities of the hospice in Nitra, where we help with the procession of people, or prepared a festive lunch for people in need sleeping in an asylum house in Nitra.
- **Spiritual Formation of Young People:** The Chaplain of the Order of Malta in Slovakia, Mons. Tibor Hajdu organises regular meetings for young volunteers focused on spiritual formation in accordance with the Catholic faith and spirituality of the Order of Malta. So far, two meetings were held - the first was purely informational and the second focused on understanding the Holy Bible. These meetings are also a platform for young people to openly discuss the spiritual topics they face on everyday basis
- **Gifts for the women in prison:** This year again we surprised the women in prison with a small gift for Christmas. Our volunteers prepared packages for the inmates in Nitra prison, that were handed over to them by the prison chaplain. This initiative is in line with the Order's long tradition of working with prisoners, detainees, and their families. The aim is to mitigate the consequences of imprisonment, such as the impact on family relationships, mental and physical health, the prospect of a new job or subsequent financial stability.



THANK YOU FOR THE RECOGNITION OF OUR VOLUNTEER WORK

At the heart of the charitable works of the Order of Malta are volunteers and their willingness to help people in need. Therefore, all the awards of thanks that we have received this year belong to them - to hundreds of our volunteers and sympathizers who dedicate their free time to helping people in need.

Thanks from our partners in Ukraine

The decision to go and help people affected by the war in Ukraine was a matter of our duty. However, the thanks of local governments and the organisations we work with to deliver humanitarian aid have not only made us happy, but also give us the energy to continue our efforts.

The Archangel Michael Award

Our organisation was honoured to receive the Archangel Michael Prize for social and humanitarian aid. On September 29th, 2022, the city of Bratislava - Old Town awarded nine awards of Archangel Michael to individuals, groups and organisations that have made a significant contribution to helping others in a difficult life situation, and who have demonstrated their humanity, compassion, and empathy in a special way.

Recognition for our President

The Government of the Sovereign Order of Malta has decided to grant the Commander Cross pro Merito Melitensi to Dr. Július Brichta, the President of our organisation. The award was handed over to Dr. Brichta by H.E. Dr. Alfred Prinz von Schönburg-Hartenstein, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the Slovak Republic. Július Brichta thanked the Government of the Order of Malta for the recognition and expressed the appreciation of this award, which is the result of the dedicated and long-term work of more than a hundred volunteers of our organisation. He was also pleased that the Government of the Order of Malta in Rome is seeing the charitable activities in Slovakia and is trying to support them also through such recognition. He also thanked the Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta for the good and long-term cooperation and support.



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS



... BIG THANK YOU GOES TO MANY OTHER INDIVIDUALS, ORGANISATIONS, AND COMPANIES, WHO ENABLE US TO HELP THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST.

DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Malteser Aid Slovakia is open for everyone who relates to the mission of the Order - to help those in need, regardless of their natinality, race or faith.

If potential volunteer is interested in our mission, he or she can enter into a probation period of one year, participate in our activities and attend the workshops and lectures. This period is to discern whether the volunteer is willing and suitable to dedicate their free time in a long term to serve the ones in need with the Order of Malta.

After the probation period, the volunteer may ask to become a registered volunteer of the Order of Malta. If admitted, the volunteer becomes a member of the Malteser Aid Slovakia and joins the global volunteer corps consisting of of more than 100,000 individuals.



DONATE

Malteser Aid Slovakia welcomes any help and support, both material and financial.

Our projects are funded exclusively through private donations, public and private grants and through corporate donations from major Slovak companies in banking and insurance sector, financial services and companies from food industry.

To ensure full transparency, our financial statements are annually audited by KPMG Slovakia, a renowned company providing independent audit services.

We thank you in advance for your generosity and support for our charity projects.

It is possible to make single or regular donation, that shall be credited to our bank account:

IBAN: SK14 1100 0000 0026 2314 2055

SWIFT: TATRSKBX



THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA

The Sovereign Order of Malta is one of the oldest institutions of Western and Christian civilisation. A lay religious order of the Catholic Church since 1113 and a subject of international law, the Sovereign Order of Malta has diplomatic relations with 112 states and the European Union, and permanent observer status at the United Nations. It is neutral, impartial and apolitical.

Today, the Order of Malta is active in over 120 countries caring for people in need through its medical, social and humanitarian works. Day-to-day, its broad spectrum of projects provides a constant support for forgotten or excluded members of society.

Founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century, the Order of Malta has a long history of service to the vulnerable and the sick. Since 1834 the Order of Malta's government seat has been in Rome, where it is guaranteed extraterritorial rights.

The Order of Malta operates through 12 Priors, 48 national Associations, 133 diplomatic missions, 1 worldwide relief agency and 33 national volunteer corps, as well as numerous hospitals, medical centres and specialist foundations. It does not pursue any economic or political goal and does not depend on any other state or government.

ORDER OF MALTA IN SLOVAKIA

In Slovakia, the Order of Malta maintains its mission through its three official institutions:

- Embassy of the Order of Malta to the Slovak republic
- Sovereign Order of Malta - Organization of Members in Slovakia (SOMOS)
- Malteser Aid Slovakia (charity service organization)

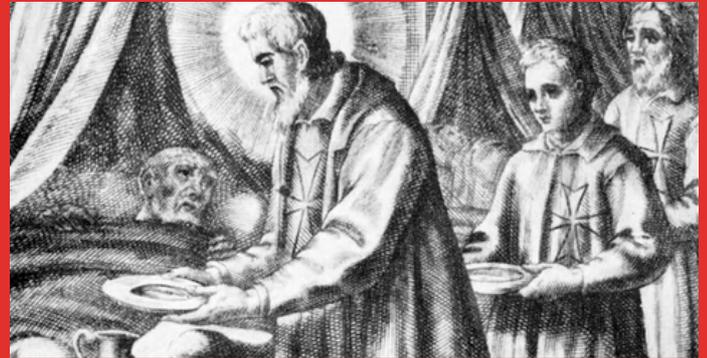


PHOTO: First Order of Malta Hospital in Jerusalem, 11th century, Jerusalem



PHOTO: WWII Humanitarian and medical aid



PHOTO: Order of Malta Flag in front of the seat of the European Commission



PHOTO: Current headquarters of the Order in Rome

MALTESER AID SLOVAKIA

Malteser Aid Slovakia is a non-governmental organization registered by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. It is the only official Order of Malta's relief organization in Slovakia.

Malteser Aid Slovakia brings together the members of the Order residing in Slovakia and more than 100 registered volunteers. They are all dedicated to the Order of Malta's mission - helping the poor and sick, alleviate their suffering, and defend the faith.

The volunteering, not-for-profit aspect of the service, is essential for our activities and projects. This genuine service of our committed volunteers is accompanied by support of professional workers from various fields when needed.

All the functions within the Malteser Aid Slovakia are honorary and members of the Order hold them without any remuneration or compensation. Activities and projects of the organization are funded from donations and grants. Malteser Aid Slovakia regularly submits its financial statements to financial auditors.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

In Slovakia we run a number of regular projects:

- Daily distribution of meals to the elderly
- Regular soup kitchens for the homeless in Bratislava, Nitra and Trenčín
- Community centres for the Roma people
- Assistance to the disabled during mass gatherings
- Events and summer camps for the young people with disabilities
- Help to the refugees (Ukraine, Syria)
- Charity stands during the Christmas markets in Bratislava and Nitra

Besides our regular projects, we always aim to help whenever needed - we are assisting in hospitals during the pandemic and supplying medical equipment, etc.



PHOTO: Volunteers in service during the Slovak International Airshow



PHOTO: Malteser Charity Christmas Punch, Christmas Markets, Bratislava



PHOTO: Roma children social integration, Nitra.



PHOTO: MaltaCamp for youth with special needs



MALTÉZSKY RÁD
SLOVENSKO
MALTÉZSKA POMOC

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUOUS SUPPORT!**

Registered seat
Kapitulská 9
81101 Bratislava

Headquarters
Jakubovo námestie 7
81109 Bratislava

Telephone
+421 (2) 5413 1296

Email
office@maltezskapomoc.sk

