

Ukraine: Erste family provides extensive humanitarian aid

- Erste Group makes donations of one million euros each to Caritas and the Red Cross
- ERSTE Foundation provides an additional one million euros through its partner networks
- Banking platform George introduces simple approach for making Ukraine donations

Together with its subsidiary banks and the ERSTE Foundation, Erste Group is implementing a comprehensive package of humanitarian support measures for Ukraine and its people. Customers can now make transfers to Ukraine free of charge. The 8 million users of the digital banking platform George can now make targeted donations for Ukraine via a newly added donation button.

*“Humanitarian aid is the first order of the day,” explains **Bernd Spalt**, CEO of Erste Group. “To provide emergency relief, Erste Group and all of our subsidiary banks have been pursuing rapid relief measures since the very first days of this awful war. Our efforts include supporting the important work being done by humanitarian aid organizations. We have an obligation to act as a pillar of stability and prosperity in our region - especially in times as difficult as these.”*

*“We have multiple collaborations with both civil society in Ukraine and critical voices of civil society in Russia and Belarus. Their current situation is dire. We stand with the people of Ukraine and with the courageous dissenting voices in Russia and Belarus. This war also addresses Europe and its values. A strong civil society is more important now than ever before,” adds **Boris Marte**, CEO of ERSTE Foundation.*

Targeted donations from both Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation

Erste Group will support its partner organizations Caritas and the Red Cross with donations **of one million euros for each of them**. These funds will be used for Ukrainian people in need. In addition, the Romanian subsidiary bank BCR donated a total of **100,000 euros** to Save the Children, the Red Cross, and Romanian government initiatives. The foundations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia donated around **400,000 euros** (one million CZK) and **50,000 euros** to Caritas and local People in Need agencies, respectively. Erste Bank Hungary and its employees have also so far donated over **50,000 euros** to aid efforts for Ukraine and its people.

In addition, ERSTE Foundation will provide a special budget of **one million euros** for acute and medium-term aid for the people of Ukraine. The ERSTE Foundation can draw on its long-established networks in civil society in Central and Eastern Europe. In a first tranche, 500,000 euros will be used

for the following measures: In close coordination with the teams of the social banking departments of Erste Group's banks in Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, those NGOs that are already active on the borders with Ukraine and in contact with their colleagues will be supported in helping people who have fled to these countries. With the help of Ukrainian and European partner foundations, organizations in Ukraine will be supported from a fund for direct aid: logistically, for evacuations and to ensure their safety. This also concerns independent journalistic reporting, which ERSTE Foundation has long supported in Eastern Europe. A considerable leveraging of these funds is ensured through the cooperation with other European foundations. Finally, ERSTE Foundation, together with its partners in education and science, as well as its associated cultural initiatives, aims reach out with aid programs to those Ukrainian people who arrive in Austria. Given that this war and its effects are likely to be felt for a long time to come, a decision on how best to apply the second part of the ERSTE Foundation's special budget for Ukraine will be made at a later date, after the situation has been assessed.

George offers donation recommendations and simple processing

Erste Group is also supporting selected aid organizations with a newly added donation function in George, its digital banking platform. The more than two million George users in Austria will find a button in their transfer window with a direct transfer option for the aid program "Nachbar in Not" ("Neighbor in Need"). This new function is being added automatically and has been available as of March 4.

The same simple donation function is also available in all of the other markets in which Erste Group customers use George: Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and Romania. The donations collected in these countries will be for a selected aid institution based in the respective country. In total, 8 million Erste Group customers will be addressed as potential donors for trustworthy aid organizations.

George Austria (2.1 mn users)	Nachbar in Not
George Czechia (2.4 mn users)	Pomozte Ukrajině s Paměť národa
George Slovakia (1.1 mn users)	Človek v ohrození
George Hungary (623,000 users)	Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat
George Romania (1.4 mn users)	Donatii pentru UKRAINA – Organizatia Salvati Copii
George Croatia (357,000 users)	Unicef, Zagreb

Fee-free banking services for Ukraine transfers

All payments from Erste Group accounts to Ukraine can be made free-of-charge. Any fees incurred will be refunded to the account holder after the transfer. This step is being taken to facilitate private aid payments and donations to those organizations where the money is needed most.

In addition, Erste Group's subsidiary banks throughout Central Europe are providing Ukrainian refugees with access to free accounts to facilitate money supply and transfers.

Further details on how Erste Bank und Sparkasse customers in Austria can support Ukraine and its people are available here: <https://www.sparkasse.at/stand-with-ukraine>

Media inquiries:

Erste Group | Press Department, Am Belvedere 1, 1100 Wien
Christian Hromatka, 050100 - 13711, E-Mail: christian.hromatka@erstegroup.com
Peter Klopf, 050100- DW 11676, E-Mail: peter.klopf@erstegroup.com
Martin Sonn-Wende, 050100 - 11680, E-Mail: martin.sonn-wende@erstegroup.com

ERSTE Stiftung
Maribel Königer, 050100 – DW 15453; E-Mail: Maribel.Koeniger@erstestiftung.org

Text also available on: <https://www.erstebank.at/presseaussendung>
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