

South Tyrol's companies show solidarity for Ukraine

Donation instead of vacation: Oberalp staff donates working days for 135.000 Euro to Caritas UKRAINE

Caritas Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone receives donation on behalf of the organization

Bolzano, Salewa Bivac - On June 28, 2022, Oberalp CEO Christoph Engl presented the Caritas Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone with a donation check in the amount of 135,000 euros. Caritas Director Franz Kripp accepted the donation check on behalf of the organization, the full amount of which will benefit the long-suffering people in Ukraine. The 900 employees of the Oberalp Group worldwide had collected donations for the Ukrainians affected by the war. The company, which is owned by the family Heiner and Ruth Oberrauch, doubled the amount donated during the campaign.

When Russia attacked Ukraine, two decisions were immediately taken in the Oberalp Group: Deliveries to Russia were suspended and an extensive immediate aid package for refugees from Ukraine and the victims of the war in Ukraine was set up. This package also included that each employee of the company could bring in working days as a donation. These were simply retained by Oberalp as a UKRAINE contribution in the next pay slip and doubled in value by the company. At the end of May, this campaign came to an end: a check for 135,000 euros was handed over to the South Tyrolean Caritas Director Franz Kripp, who will divide this amount among various Caritas projects that directly support people in the war zone in Ukraine. "It was important to us that these funds take the most direct route to those in need, and this is also what we had promised our employees," says Christoph Engl, CEO of the Oberalp Group. Caritas Director Franz Kripp knows that the willingness to provide support during crises is always exceedingly high at the beginning of these, only to drop off very quickly. "In South Tyrol, we have so far been able to collect 1.3 million of donation money for Ukraine, and recently the volume of donations has stalled somewhat. So, this large amount is a surprise and a boost at just the right time," explains Kripp.

The Caritas Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone is involved in the international Caritas network and will invest the amounts in long-term projects such as the construction of storage facilities for food and medicines, which can thus be kept safe, and housing shelters. Since the beginning of the war, Caritas Bolzano-Bressanone has established an intensive relationship with the Diocese of Kolomyia in western Ukraine. Donations for projects and people in need are distributed locally through this Caritas branch.



Donation handover in front of the Salewa Bivac – left to right: Global Responsible of Carits Diocese Bolzano-Bressanone Sandra D'Onofrio, Oberalp CEO Christoph Engl, Carits Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone Director Franz Kripp.

The Oberalp fundraising campaign is just one of the many initiatives for Ukraine launched by the South Tyrolean Oberalp Group. At the beginning of the war, in February of this year, the Eastern European branch of the Oberalp Group immediately got involved with numerous measures to support the refugees. Rescue blankets, first aid kits, clothing, drinking bottles and sleeping mats were provided. Many employees took in Ukrainians at their homes, and the employees were reimbursed by the company for their rent. Immediately after the war began, Oberalp's management set aside an emergency aid budget of 10,000 euros for the company's branch in Eastern Europe, so that help could be provided quickly and without complications where it was most needed.

Solidarity is a deeply rooted corporate value at the Oberalp Group. The Oberalp owner family Heiner and Ruth Oberrauch has been committed to helping people in need for generations. For example, the family provided three private apartments for refugees from Ukraine in Bolzano, some of which had been furnished and equipped for a longer stay by Oberalp employees themselves.

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The Oberalp Group is a family-owned and management-led company with headquarters in Bolzano, northern Italy. Heiner Oberrauch founded the company in 1981 and today the group employs roughly 700 people, runs 10 subsidiaries in Europe and the United States, and serves 3,500 customers in over 60 countries worldwide. In addition to the development and production of mountain sports articles, the company also operates as a distribution partner of sports-based brands. The formerly Munich-based SALEWA brand has been part of the Oberalp Group since 1990. Over the years, the group has acquired the brands DYNAFIT, POMOCA, WILD COUNTRY, and EVOLV. In 2022, the group launched the new mountain brand by women for women LaMunt. The family business relies on the courage to break new ground, continuous innovation in products, processes, and thinking. A conscious, sensible approach to the environment and resources and a passion for sport and mountains are the foundation of a living corporate culture. Since 2019, the Oberalp Group's sustainability report "Contribute" has been published simultaneously with the balance sheet figures. For the fifth time in succession, the company was the only enterprise in Italy to be awarded the "Leader Status" of the NGO "Fair Wear Foundation".