

Press release

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European rail sector shows solidarity with Ukrainians

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) expresses its full solidarity with Ukraine and its people. CER and its members are actively participating in EU-wide humanitarian efforts to support refugees fleeing the country. CER members and partners are committed to and comply with all applicable sanctions against the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus.

The Ukrainian people are currently exposed to immeasurable human suffering, with many forced to leave their homes and country. CER partner member Ukrainian Railways (UZ) reports that nearly a million people have already been evacuated, with priority given to children, women, and elderly people. So far evacuation and humanitarian aid trains have been able to run from Kyiv and other rail hubs like Lviv, Uzhhorod and Chop to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic either on direct or connecting services.

Neighbouring rail companies PKP (Poland), CFM (Moldova), CFR Călători (Romania), MÁV (Hungary), ZSSK & ŽSR (Slovakia), ČD, ČD Cargo & Správa železnic (Czechia), are actively supporting the evacuation and aid to citizens, for instance organising humanitarian trains for refugees directly from Ukraine to the neighbouring countries and helping send humanitarian aid back into the country. PKP for example runs humanitarian trains transiting between the following Polish-Ukrainian border stations: Medyka – Mostiska, Hrubieszów – Izow, and Dorohusk – Jagodin. ÖBB (Austria) confirms the cooperation of its Czech subsidiary Rail Cargo Logistics with the Czech partners on a night train serving as a land bridge between Prague and Kyiv with room for 600 pallets of groceries and 400 passenger beds.

As refugees arrive in the EU, many more rail companies are banding together to offer additional carriages on trains and make travel free for Ukrainian citizens to reach refuge or join family members across the continent. At the crossroads of Europe, for instance, cooperation between ÖBB (Austria), ČD (Czechia) and Deutsche Bahn (Germany) is opening up additional travel options to more arrival stations. Onward rail journeys within these countries can be booked for free by Ukrainians. Elsewhere, rail companies including CFL (Luxembourg), DSB (Denmark), LTG (Lithuania), NS (Netherlands) BLS, SBB (Switzerland), SNCB/NMBS (Belgium), SNCF (France), and VR Group (Finland) are also offering free tickets to Ukrainian refugees, while Eurostar is offering free passage to those eligible to enter the UK. Other companies like FS Italiane (Italy), LDZ (Latvia), SŽ (Slovenia) and ŽFBH (Bosnia and Herzegovina) are on standby to assist in relief efforts.

European railway companies are determined to help the refugees, most of whom have lost everything and are left traumatised. As part of the national crisis and help efforts rail companies are providing assistance from information helplines to accommodation, space for care & counselling and even employment opportunities, as well as organising other forms of humanitarian aid such as fundraising and essential supply collections. As a further example, FS Italiane is ready to make available a medical train (used in Italy

during Covid-19) to reach the border with Ukraine or other railway destinations where a small mobile hospital may be needed.

Through these actions, the railway community is marking its solidarity with its Ukrainian Railways colleagues and the Ukrainian people, helping the movement of people and vital aid in times of need. These initiatives will continue to evolve and expand in the coming days. In addition, CER members and partners fully apply all sanctions emitted by their national governments, and for EU members the European Union, as a matter of course.



Photo credit: SNCB/NMBS

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About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 79% of the rail network length, 77% of the rail freight business and about 90% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on Twitter [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).