



## SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL SWITZERLAND

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### WE STAND UP!

#### Dear Soroptimists – dear interested friends!

It is true that all too often we are content with the role of the passive muse, the weak woman ... must. We are accused of being too sensitive and not rational enough and of having little leadership talent. But history shows a different picture. Nataliya has also clearly proven the opposite with her actions. Women are strong, but are always pushed to the sidelines. Women have an extraordinary amount of organizational talent, networking capacity and helpfulness. This has also been clearly demonstrated in the Ukraine crisis. Thanks to our association with Ukrainian and Polish Soroptimists, we were able to pool all our energies and abilities to alleviate the consequences of this war drama somewhat. We thank Nataliya for her courage and her tremendous life energy, which she brings up despite all resistance.

*Brigitte Mantilleri, President of the Swiss Union SI Union 2020 - 2022*

Since the beginning of March 2022, shortly after the outbreak of the war, our aid has been running to Ukraine, especially to Lviv. On the one hand, these are remittances via Poland, the remuneration collected by Nataliya's son Serhej, while Maker Nataliya is the distribution centre for our assistance. A circle of around 20 people is intensively committed to this, often working under extremely dangerous conditions.

**Nataliya - Who is this woman?** She, the retired engineer, the maker, the woman with the practical short haircut, with the red hair?



She is also familiar with accounting matters, works extremely precisely, sends weekly reports and bank receipts. The Union Switzerland has not only been accustomed to this for half a year. For more than 22 years, when Nataliya was the founding president of the Lviv/Lviv Club, Nataliya and other Soroptimists have been working on a wide variety of projects. It began with the construction of a children's hospital as well as other projects in the medical field, which we will continue to report on in News 8 from Ukraine. This woman quickly realized that the lethargy and obedience to orders of communism must give way to an active participation in shaping the future. Joining a worldwide organization came at just the right time! After 2014, the women of the SI Lviv Club increasingly found faith in shaping the future with the Maidan movement, the reduction of corruption and a change of power in politics.

**SI Union Switzerland and Soroptimists from all over Switzerland have placed their trust in this woman for many years. Why?** Since 1996, they have been able to follow the progress of the country and the benefits of our investments in homes and hospitals on their travels. The center of the actions was and is always Nataliya, accompanied by son Serhej. **As we know them, we admire above all their continuous creativity and social competence.** All the women from the Swiss Clubs they know point out Nataliya's kindness of heart in the course of the conversation! At the same time, some call them a heroine. In particular, it is strongly emphasized that this woman is the central office working in the background. Not a one-woman show, but a driving force that always does the most urgent thing with the circle of younger and older Soroptimists. Tackling the bare necessities – "you have to do something" – as Nataliya knows it from the tradition of her Slavic family. Where, until recently, in emergency situations, the vegetables from the dacha were preserved for the winter supply. At the same time, this woman is familiar with the Western European world, as she had spent some youth with her family in Vienna, where her father and his family were stationed as a military functionary after the 2nd World War. In addition, she was

'pushed' by the Swiss Soroptimists to learn even better German, back when she was a guest at the Clubs Rapperswil and Kreuzlingen for the first time in 1999. The contact with the technical progress of modernity brought many additional further training courses.

**In the weekly telephone conversations with Nataliya, the Swiss Soroptimists conduct, on the other hand, the horrific situation is repeatedly described concretely.** The Soroptimist from Lviv tells us in mid-August: "Again and again, bombs are flying into our area, which are sent from Belarus. The people are in great turmoil, you are never sure where the bombs will hit again. – Every day two trains with refugees reach Lviv. Many are wounded, including people who have had limbs shot away, they can no longer walk and after treatment in the hospital they need wheelchairs."

The photos also tell of the achievements: happy faces of war orphans and children from war zones who are recovering in the Carpathians or gratitude and satisfaction of people who have received a food package.

However, our further help is desperately needed.



## **Our transports since the beginning of March**

**Half a year ago, the war began!** Thanks to the long-standing and stable relations with Ukraine, several transports of medical goods and food were transported from Mendrisiotto as well as from Schaffhausen, Le Locle, Montreux and Rapperswil to Ukraine or to the Polish-Ukrainian border. With great commitment, the participating Clubs set up and continue to do so – an important help against this horrible war!

*A bravo to all the Clubs that have been committed to Ukraine since February: they have organized transports, handed in care products, sold baked Easter bunnies and much, much more. Has your Club also started or already carried out an action? We would be pleased if you send us pictures and a short text so that we can publish your contribution to Ukraine aid on the Union's website in the section "News from Ukraine"! (<https://swiss-soroptimist.ch/blog-solidaritaet-ukraine/>)*



## **Finances & Donations**

**Fatal, but true – the war continues and our aid is more important than ever!** "Don't let Ukraine be at the door," is Katharina Streuli's emphatic appeal.

**Natalina, namesake and president of the Club Engiadina, is appealing:**

«Because we are Soroptimists and women, this help is a matter of course for me. It is also clear that our solidarity and trust is based on the long-standing network with Club Lviv.»

*Natalina Robustelli, President of SI Cub Engiadina*

**At the end of August 2022, we received more than SFr./EURO 400'000 in donations.**

**Thanks again to all donors.** At this time, we still have just under SFr./EURO 70'000 available for direct aid to Ukraine. It is planned to continue to support Nataliya and her team with weekly payments.

The Ad Hoc Commission has also decided to return our Polish sisters to EURO 5'000 on a one-off basis in order to continue their support for refugees on the ground. **Our direct aid to Ukraine must continue, which is why we are also reaching you with a renewed appeal for donations.**

On our website [www.swiss-soroptimist.ch/solidaritaet-ukraine](http://www.swiss-soroptimist.ch/solidaritaet-ukraine) you will find the **blog of the Union President SI Brigitte Mantilleri** as well as other **current news from Ukraine!**

**Contacts to our Ad-hoc Commission:** [ukraine@swiss-soroptimist.ch](mailto:ukraine@swiss-soroptimist.ch)

**We are happy about echoes to the news from Ukraine 7!**

The news from Ukraine no. 8 will be published after the fall break.

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#### **Konto in CHF**

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