

News from Ukraine No. 18, December 2023



HAPPY DAY, BONJOUR, BONGIORNO Доброго дня!

A Christmas tree here, twinkling lights there, it's Christmas time. After hours of contemplation come the last days of the year. We want to finish what can be finished and then we start the new year. This new beginning bolsters hope and confidence. It gives us the energy to continue pursuing our goals in Ukraine and to support our sisters there in their immense work as much as possible. Together with them we hope for peace.

Catherine Schuppli, President SI Union Switzerland 2023-2024

The war in Ukraine has been going on for a very long time.

Thanks to your help, dear Swiss Soroptimists, we have been able to generously support the projects of our partners in Ukraine time and again. As a result, we are able to alleviate the suffering in many places in Ukraine. We are always overwhelmed that the Soroptimists on the ground are helping other people despite rocket attacks and bomb alarms. We received a letter of thanks from Dnipro (the city that until recently was called Dnipropetrovsk):

"Dear sisters, what a lovely gift for us and our projects. We had almost no money left for Christmas presents for two groups, the children from the eastern region of Ukraine, who are now in Dnipro, and the children from Kherson, who are now also in our neighbourhood after

the destruction of the hydroelectric dam. We support these children again and again, this time with the help of the Swiss Union...".

Last year, four members of the Kyiv Club were still in Chur and Flims. They also organised the Chur Club's Christmas party.

Meanwhile, Maria, the president of Club Kyiv, and Anja are back in Ukraine with their children. Club Kyiv celebrated its 30th birthday on 4 November. Unfortunately, nobody from the Ukraine Ad-hoc Commission was able to attend. But we sent our congratulations via Zoom.



The 30th anniversary celebration of Club Kyiv on 4 November 2023. President Maria Biloid in the centre.

One of the two women, Anja (on the far right of the picture), writes from Ukraine: "We are more or less fine. Yesterday my husband returned from the war in the East. That was the best present... But today there was an air raid alarm. The Russians fired rockets at us and we had to go into the cellar".

Olena Dvorytska, President Maria's mother, has stayed in Flims. She is now responsible for looking after the Ukrainian refugees in the Canton of Graubünden.

As mentioned, the Ukrainian women organised the Chur Club's 2022 Christmas meeting and talked about their Christmas traditions:

An interesting tradition on the eve before Christmas is the Holy Supper or "Bagata Kutya", which, like the number of apostles, includes 12 fasting dishes, each with a specific symbol.

Wheat symbolises eternal life, honey - the happiness of the Saints in heaven.



Annelies Debrunner has written the last 17 Ukraine News. We would like to thank her most sincerely for her hard work.

Sina Stiffler, Ukraine Representative of the Swiss Union