

City prepared for deployment order from the state – first aid centre for Ukraine refugees at Messe Frankfurt

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More and more people seeking protection from Ukraine are currently arriving in Frankfurt by train, bus, plane or private car. The city is the central contact point for refugees in Hesse. For days, those responsible have been preparing intensively to prevent a situation like the one in Berlin. A corresponding operational order from the state to the city's lower disaster control authority to create a first aid centre was issued on Wednesday.

A first aid centre with emergency accommodation for refugees from Ukraine is being built at Messe Frankfurt from the end of this week. In Hall 1 on the Frankfurt exhibition grounds, there will be a first port of call where everything necessary will be provided until the people can be placed in longer-term accommodation throughout Hesse. A contract to this effect was concluded with the city at short notice and without red tape.

"The people fleeing to us from Ukraine need our help. They must be able to trust that our declarations of solidarity are not just lip service," says Peter Feldmann, Lord Mayor of the City of Frankfurt. "That is why the first aid centre that we are setting up at short notice at our trade fair is so important. Frankfurt is a cosmopolitan city that has become a second home for many refugees in its history. Let's show the people from Ukraine that they are welcome here."

The emergency shelter will initially be set up in Hall 1.1 and can also be extended to the second level, Hall 1.2, if required.

"I am pleased that the state has taken up my suggestion that the distribution of people in Hesse should also be managed from Frankfurt and has given us the corresponding operational order," says Frankfurt's head of social affairs Elke Voitl. "This saves the refugees further journeys after the exhausting flight. In our experience so far, most people arrive here traumatised, very exhausted and often hungry," says the city councillor. "About half of those seeking protection are children and young people. For them, it is particularly important to quickly have a protected and safe place to breathe again. We want to create this here in Frankfurt with the fair near the main railway station, together with all our forces," says Elke Voitl.

The shelter is run by the German Red Cross (DRK) and the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB). Messe Frankfurt is responsible for the construction and other services within the accommodation.

"We have quickly and unbureaucratically set up emergency accommodation on our exhibition grounds in Hall 1, as immediate assistance is required," says Uwe Behm, the Member of the Board of Management of Messe Frankfurt responsible for the exhibition

grounds. "This has become a first point of contact or intermediate station to provide people who have had to flee Ukraine with everything they need until they can be placed in longer-term accommodation."

In addition to the corresponding preparations for the infrastructure on the exhibition grounds, Fairconstruction, a subsidiary of Messe Frankfurt, is helping to equip two sports halls for refugees in Frankfurt with stand construction materials.



First aid centre in Messe Frankfurt's exhibition hall 1. From left to right: Uwe Behm, Member of the Board of Management of Messe Frankfurt, Elke Voitl, Head of Social Affairs of the City of Frankfurt am Main, Peter Feldmann, Lord Mayor of the City of Frankfurt am Main and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Frankfurt. © City of Frankfurt am Main/ Ben Kilb

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Background information on Messe Frankfurt

The Messe Frankfurt Group is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. The Group employs approximately 2,300* people at its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main and in 30 subsidiaries around the world. In 2021, the company had to contend with the challenges posed by the pandemic for the second consecutive year. Annual sales will be approximately €140* million after having been as high as €736 million in 2019 before the pandemic. Even in difficult times caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we are globally networked with our industry sectors. We have close ties with our industry sectors and serve our customers' business interests efficiently within the framework of our Fairs & Events, Locations and Services business fields. One of the Group's key USPs is its closely knit global sales network, which extends throughout the world. Our comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. We are expanding our digital expertise with new business models. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services. Headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com

* Preliminary figures for 2021