

PRAGUE, 6 April 2022

Aid to Refugees from Ukraine Did Not Disrupt the Usual Operation of Prague Main Station

More than 100 000 refugees from Ukraine have passed through Prague Main Station at the turn of February and March. Thanks to the utmost commitment of Správa železnic staff and a number of other institutions, as well as hundreds of volunteers from several non-profit organisations, it was possible to provide assistance to the refugees in such a way that the emergency had practically no impact on ordinary passengers or traffic management. In recent days, the number of Ukrainian citizens arriving in Prague has been gradually decreasing.

Evacuation trains with Ukrainians began arriving in Prague more than a month ago. First aid was prepared for them by Správa železnic in cooperation with the Prague City Hall via a tent in the new check-in hall between the entrances to the metro. Subsequently, an improvised help centre was set up in the south wing of the Fanta's building, where the interested persons can receive basic information about the possibilities of assistance. *"We have the southern part of the Fanta's building and its entire ground floor, which is adjacent to the staircase to the second floor, where the cultural hall is located. It now serves as a relaxation lounge. There is also an improvised infirmary on the ground floor of the Fanta's building, where medical students from the Third Medical Faculty of the Charles University in cooperation with the Prague Emergency Medical Service of the Capital City of Prague provide initial treatment, or direct refugees to crisis centre services,"* says Jan Vágner, Head of the Prague Main Station Building Management, on behalf of Správa železnic.

Approximately 40 to 50 people care for Ukrainian refugees every day. Among them are railway and state firefighters, employees of Správa železnic, Prague City Hall, České dráhy (Czech Railways), Police of the Czech Republic, Municipal Police of the Capital City of Prague, medics and last but not least hundreds of volunteers from non-profit organisations who rotate through regular shifts. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is the endeavour of all involved parties to ensure that Ukrainian refugees stay at the main station for no more than few hours and continue their journey to other destinations or to the regional contact centre as soon as possible, where they are provided with further support.

In addition, it was and is necessary to ensure that the station operates in a completely standard way and that passengers and carriers get the comfort they are used to. On a regular working day, almost 980 trains and around 70,000 passengers pass through. *"Traffic control had to deal with the requirement to bring trains with refugees to the first platform so that they could have the shortest possible way to the place of help,"* Jan Vágner continues. *"Thanks to the perfect cooperation of all participating organisations and companies, volunteers and Prague City Hall, we are managing very well,"* he adds.