

Warsaw, 16 March 2022

#Property4Ukraine. Polish real estate industry provides shelter for 3,000 refugees

At this point, four office buildings in Warsaw are being converted into accommodation centers for refugees from Ukraine. Leading real estate companies are responsible for the preparation and long-term maintenance of such spaces.

A total of 3,000 refugees will be accommodated in four buildings by Archicom, Echo Investment, Globalworth and Skanska. The real estate industry is uniting to provide shelter for refugees from Ukraine, which has been attacked by Russia. At the moment, twelve entities are involved in the initiative: AFI Europe, Atenor, Cornerstone Investment Management, Echo Investment, EPP, Globalworth, Griffin Capital Partners, GTC, HB Reavis Poland, Immofinanz, Panattoni and Skanska. In addition, formal mechanisms have been initiated, which will enable willing companies and individuals to support the project financially.

“On February 24, we found ourselves in a completely new reality. The attack of Russia on a free Ukraine changed everything overnight, and we in Warsaw had to adjust to operating in crisis conditions. We all reported for work, but we could not have prepared support on such a scale and of such a high standard if it had not been for the support of private companies. This is a huge expression of solidarity for which I am grateful!” says Michał Olszewski, Deputy Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw.

The companies that have joined the **#Property4Ukraine** campaign want to help refugees in the most logical and natural way for this kind of business—by offering Ukrainians space in office buildings, which have been especially arranged in response to this situation. Echo Investment, Globalworth and Skanska are adapting the buildings, at their own expense, to best meet the needs of the refugees. Expenses related to the operation of these centers will be shared with other companies that decide to participate in the initiative. Organizational and substantive support is provided by United Nations Global Compact Network Poland.

In the face of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, it is absolutely crucial to protect civilians and ensure their safety. UN Global Compact has been included in the UN humanitarian aid chain under the Connecting Business initiative (CBI), coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The task of UN Global Compact Network Poland is to mobilize the private sector and coordinate the business cooperation with UN agencies, key Polish NGOs and other stakeholders involved in the humanitarian aid.

“According to UNHCR, we are facing the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II. Therefore, it is crucial to, immediately, begin providing long-term support to Ukrainian refugees, primarily in terms of accommodation. It is extremely important that real estate companies have jointly and severally decided to offer assistance in this sensitive area, in response to the appeal of UN Global Compact Network Poland—“The business community united for Ukraine!” says Kamil Wyszowski, Executive Director at UN Global Compact Network Poland. *I hope that this example will also encourage other industry players in both Polish and other European cities to act in a similar way. The UN Global Compact is an initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which brings together businesses that respect the 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact, including those related to human rights and anti-corruption. Compliance with such rules is a guarantee of transparency in this type of complex project. The primary objective is to provide effective, long-term and sensible assistance.*

Office spaces are currently being gradually converted into temporary refugee centers. This includes four buildings in Warsaw: two office buildings within the Empark complex, owned by Echo Investment and Archicom, and two skyscrapers in the center of Warsaw—Skanska’s Ilmet—as well as Warta Tower, owned by Globalworth. Approximately 400 people already live in Echo Investment’s building. The spaces ready to accommodate refugees, together with sanitary facilities, will then become the responsibility of Municipal Social Welfare Centers, which will be in charge of their management.

The initiative can be supported by making a donation to the dedicated account of UN Global Compact Network Poland—the business community united for Ukraine!

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