



## Aid for Ukraine: Audi employees are volunteering

- **War in Ukraine: employees collect donations or help in social institutions**
- **Audi supports personal commitment and accepts social responsibility**
- **Commitment is a point of honor: “Fostering and supporting this is a labor of love for us as a company,” says Member of the Board of Management for Human Resources Sabine Maassen.**

On February 24, the day Anna Demchenko’s native country was attacked, she was on her phone every minute. As friends and family members in Ukraine described the local situation to her, colleagues from Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm were asking how they could help. At the same time, this sales representative was busy getting her sister and her two small children out of the war zone and to Anna’s house.

She dashed off an email describing what material donations were needed in Ukraine and asked her sales department coworker Jasmin Wehling to forward the information among their colleagues. Neither of them imagined what would happen next: her email spread instantly and initiated an enormous wave of helpfulness at the Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm sites. A volunteer team formed spontaneously to coordinate material donations, organize temporary storage spaces, and label boxes. The first result: two trucks filled with supplies immediately started making their way to the Polish-Ukrainian border. There, the helpers handed over their valuable cargo to the donation distribution center managed by Round Table, a non-profit organization. Audi has been working on joint social projects with its offshoot [the Round Table 96 Ingolstadt service club](#) for years.

### **Relief supplies out, refugees in**

In addition, the initiative [jetzt1zeichen.de](#) founded by Audi employee Christian Brinkmann also took a portion of the donations on the road to Ukraine. Audi supplied vehicles for those trips in collaboration with the relief agency Malteser International. Volunteer drivers brought the supplies to the Polish-Ukrainian border over several weekends. After the shipment and a few hours of sleep, the aid volunteers took numerous refugees with them on their return trip. Thanks to the collaboration with Malteser International, they brought these women, children, and in some cases unaccompanied minors to relatives and meeting points in Germany. “Mothers looking toward the future to save their kids, children who don’t talk at all because they are exhausted and stressed – those are images we will never forget,” says Brinkmann.

Initiating calls for donations, transporting supplies, or accommodating refugees – in this moment, many Audi employees have shown a commitment to the people who have fled Ukraine and for the ones who are still in Ukraine. Audi supports and encourages its employees’ personal commitments.

## **Every contribution counts! Three examples that show the diversity of Audi employees' personal commitment:**

Eugen Bienia, Fleet Modification, Audi Neckarsulm

“When the first images of the war came on the news, I had just one thing in my mind: ‘I have to help!’ It started with a van filled with clothing, food, and medicine, but since then I’ve become the coordinator of a large network of private individuals and companies in the Heilbronn region and beyond. We bring supply trucks to my hometown Gliwice in Poland. There, some like-minded locals and I have opened a free store for Ukrainian refugees. I go there as often as my job as a truck mechanic allows. People find everything they need for day-to-day living there. I still can’t understand the reason for this war – but I’m glad I can do something.”

Johanna Schestak, Audi Akademie, Neckarsulm

“My parents fled Romania in 1989, so helping with this is completely personal for me. I saw a call on Yammer for employees at the Ingolstadt site to donate supplies and I and some of my coworkers wanted to get involved. Since there wasn’t a collection point in Neckarsulm, I spontaneously set up a collection point in Neckarsulm. It all happened really quickly and without complications: volunteers from various parts of the company helped coordinate supplies in their own departments and deliver them to the Audi Akademie. Colleagues from Audi Planung GmbH in Ingolstadt then picked everything up while they were on a business trip to Neckarsulm. It was a spontaneous and encouraging action across different sites and departments!”

Armin Muck, Audi Media Services, Ingolstadt

“My wife has been friends with a Ukrainian woman in Kyiv for 22 years. They’re both German teachers and have chaperoned several student exchange trips together. When our friend decided to leave the country with her seven year-old daughter in early March, there was no question that we would pull out all the stops. They managed to get a train to the Hungarian border. My wife and I picked them up there in our car. After spending 28 hours fleeing, both mother and daughter had to wait another four hours at the border in the freezing cold – supplied with warm drinks from us. I’ll never forget the look of relief on their faces when we were finally able to receive them on the Hungarian side. Now they both live with us in Munich. We’re squeezing together, helping them settle in – and sharing their concerns about their loved ones back home.”

## **Employee podcast**

What drives people to help as selflessly as Anna Demchenko? What do they go through and feel in the process? And what do they tell others who also want to help but aren’t quite sure how? Podcasters Brigitte Theile and Axel Robert Müller asked them and the answers are moving.

## **Audi and its employees are donating**

Immediately after the war began, Audi donated €1 million: Audi Hungaria provided €250,000 for regional aid projects in Hungary and €750,000 are going to UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe, the German partner organization to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). On site, the money then goes to corresponding regional UNHCR projects.



Additionally, Audi offered its employees the opportunity to campaign for company donations to regional aid organizations under the auspices of the “Team Spirit Initiative.” Many Audi employees also heeded the call for private donations. The money donated to what we call the “staff donations” fund goes directly to UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe. About €1.6 million in private donations have already been received (as of May 1).

### **Commitment is a point of honor**

Volunteering is a tradition at Audi. The company organized its first volunteer day under the motto “Audi Volunteers” in 2012, when employees did volunteer work for social projects in their regions. Since then, that singular event has become a large, continuous portfolio of different offerings. “The number of different projects that Audi employees support in their free time is incredibly impressive,” says Member of the Board of Management for Human Resources Sabine Maassen. “Fostering and supporting this is a labor of love for us as a company.”

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In 2021, the Audi Group delivered around 1.681 million cars from the Audi brand, 8,405 sports cars from the Lamborghini brand and 59,447 motorcycles from the Ducati brand to customers. In the 2021 fiscal year, AUDI AG achieved a total revenue of €53.1 billion and an operating profit before special items of €5.5 billion. More than 89,000 people all over the world work for the Audi Group, around 58,000 of them in Germany. With its attractive brands, new models, innovative mobility offerings and groundbreaking services, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, individual, premium mobility.

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