**Yana Trubiichuk**, Caritas SPES Ukraine

*\*Slovenian press conference\**

**Vacation for the group of 50 children from 29th – 9th July in Strunjan**

50 children are coming from various cities and locations around Kyiv and from Kyiv itself. 28 girls and 22 boys:

13 children are from the big families with 3+ kids

6 children are from the families where at least one parent is in army

1 child from the family with damaged household because of the war

23 children from families which have lost partially or entirely their regular source of income because of the war or relocation.

7 children are coming from families with vulnerable conditions: parents working in the emergency services, children with disabilities or coming from the territory of possible and active hostilities.

The children from the Kyiv suburbs were invited to participate in this project since many of them have stayed in Kyiv and the nearby towns during the Russian occupation of the region from February till April 2022. Some of the participants are from Irpin and Bucha village which are now known for the whole world for its atrocities and killing which russians have bring to this small towns. According to Ukrainian authorities, only in Bucha 458 bodies have been recovered from the town, including 9 children under the age of 18; among the victims, 419 people were killed with weapons and 39 appeared to have died of natural causes, possibly related to the occupation. In Irpin itself, the bodies of 290 civilian victims have been found and witnesses and prosecutors tell of a month of terror in a narrow zone in the town's south-western quarter. A disproportionate number of victims were women. These only a couple of Kyiv’s surroundings which has witnessed a brutal invasion and unprecedent mass killing, therefore the intension was to take the children from these region and provide them at least some short-time vacations abroad. There is not a single aspect of children’s lives that the war has not impacted, with children killed, injured, forced from their homes, missing out on critical education and denied the benefits of a safe and secure environment. The war is also having a devastating impact on the mental health and well-being of children.

Some of the aims that we follow for this project:

**Safety and well-being**: By sending them abroad, we aim to provide a secure and peaceful environment where they can temporarily escape the effects of the war, experience a different culture, and engage in recreational activities.

**Psychological support:** we want to provide psychological support to the children who have been affected by the war. This activity can serve as a form of respite and offer them an opportunity to relax and process their emotions in a supportive environment.

**Educational and cultural enrichment**: Sending children abroad will expose them to new cultures, languages, and experiences, promoting their personal growth and broadening their horizons. The objective here is to foster intercultural understanding and tolerance, enhancing their education and overall development.

**Peacebuilding and conflict resolution**: this project aims to contribute to peacebuilding efforts. By bringing children from different backgrounds together in a neutral setting, we will encourage dialogue, friendship, and cooperation, promoting long-term peace and understanding.

***Caritas-Spes Ukraine humanitarian response from beginning of war***

**40 shelters around the country with providing accommodation and services to internally displaced**

284 015 provided services

2729 beneficiaries

**Humanitarian centers**

41 humanitarian centers where aid is delivered

406 235 food kits delivered

279 536 hygiene kits delivered

7500 Vouchers delivered for the food and hygiene

**Rebuilding**

50 re-built houses in the regions of Kharkiv and Herson, Mykolaiv and Kyiv.

167 beneficiaries

**Cash support**

2525 families received cash support in the region of Odesa, Zhytomyr and Kharkiv

6658 beneficiaries

**Medical help**

62 637 medical services provided

14 684 first-aid kits distributed

1949 first-aid kits (part of the EA project)

6877 families or households received first-aid kits

20 632 people have received first-aid kits

**Rehabilitation activities:**

Reconstruction of children's recreation center in Zarichany center

Rehabilitation activities of autist and down syndrome children

Three new centers for the IDPs in Kyiv and mobile clinic – medical analyze for the people in need.

New program in act with collaboration with local associations and authorities.

**PSS support:**

Thera are new programs in 5 centers for the adults and children on PSS support in Kharkiv, Odesa, Zhytomyr, Lutsk and Vinnitsa. The children, families and other IDPs had a possibility to receive a 6 lessons of PSS training with psychologist and in the summer time we continuing with daily camps for the children and families in the same locations.

In the region of Kharkiv there are organizing the caps every Saturday for more than 150 children who have not been in contact for a long time with other pears, therefore is going to be open a new center for children and teens.

There are more than 1500 children receiving a PSS support in the foreign countries for a 10-14 days vacations and last year about 400 children and animators.

**Volunteers:**

During the period of the war many volunteers were in contacts with the activities and specially the youth who are now connecting with some new activities and meetings.

**Winterization**:

There was done a huge support for the winter time with generators, heating, wooden fireworks just from ministry from Slovenian (among them 800 financed by Slovene Ministry of Foreign and European affairs), blankets for the whole Ukraine and especially the regions like Kharkiv, Hearson, Mykolaiv where was a big need.

**Social laundry:**

There was open a few social laundries for the IDPs who have not have a possibility to wash their clothes.

**Caritas social centers:**

There was open a new social center in Odesa, Mykolaiv, social kitchen and social center in Zhytomyr in aim to be closer to the people and to be able help us much is possible.

A new program in going on with education of new professions that the people can receive work.