

# AN EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY CASE STUDY HOW LPG IS HELPING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN POLAND TODAY



Image provided by POGP.

Since the 24th February 2022, the result of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict has caused Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II, with an estimated eight million people being displaced. This Exceptional Energy case study looks at how LPG in Poland has been a critical aid in these challenging times.



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# The Humanitarian Crisis in Demographic Terms

According to official data, during first eight months of the conflict, Border Guard officers cleared over seven million people at border crossings from Ukraine to Poland. Some 93% of the refugees are women, many elderly, 63% arriving with children, often arriving with nothing but basic hand luggage, leading to specific challenges including immediate medical care and decent accommodation.

International community-supported efforts were undertaken by the Polish citizens and Polish Government from the very beginning. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and WLPGA observer member, has been active in relief efforts, launching its cash assistance programme in March 2022. The Agency set up twelve Blue Points – Safe Spaces, Protection and Support Hubs in Poland in co-operation with UNICEF, where refugees can get information and advice on rights and services and receive immediate psychosocial support.

Refugees from Ukraine cross the Polish border either in their own vehicles or on foot, as well as by collective transportation – trains and buses of regular lines or specially organised transportation. At a time of peak refugee influx all Polish-Ukrainian border crossings operated on a 24-hour basis. Volunteers provided assistance to refugees as soon as they crossed the border. Ukrainians received hot meals, dry clothes and assistance in planning their next steps.

Many LPG companies including AmeriGas, Bałtykgaz, Chemet, DragonGaz, Gaspol and GOK joined in organising front-line assistance by providing, among other things, means of transportation, supply of LPG for gas heaters and catering outlets serving hot meals.

This case study outlines some of the most common forms of assistance that the LPG companies and their employees provided during the refugee crisis.



Image provided by Gaspol.

## Refugee Transfer

After the outbreak of the conflict, many Poles went to the border to pick up refugees and provide them with transportation to safe places. Among them were Gaspol employees who organised cars, drivers and free transportation for the refugees. Many of them made several trips, taking the migrants to safe places, to their families or reception points. Often Ukrainians working in Polish companies had to leave their entire families in their homeland. Employees of Chemet SA actively organised evacuation of relatives of their Ukrainian colleagues, coordinating transportation for entire families, and taking care of further comprehensive assistance, such as providing housing.



Images provided by Gaspol.

# Catering

It is only natural that after crossing the border, nourishment was the first basic form of assistance for refugees and the sheer scale of this assistance was enormous.

AmeriGas Polska supported people in the Ukraine through the UGI Feeding and Fueling initiative, partnering with World Central Kitchen (WCK) to help reach their goal of serving 100,000 hot meals a day to Ukrainian refugees. Monetary donations from AmeriGas/UGI employees were supplemented by their employer with deliveries of LPG to fuel WCK catering sites.



WLPGA observer member WCK also approached the Polish Liquid Gas Association (POGP) office for assistance and fuel logistics support in their relief efforts. Members of POGP were directly involved in providing LPG for the hot meal stoves. The POGP office assumed a co-ordination role for member companies, so that they could focus on managing their core business of efficient relief operations. POGP assistance in understanding the Polish standards and safety regulations relevant for LPG industry was also invaluable.

POGP activities in supporting WCK were focused on the WCK mobile kitchen site in Przemyśl, a major city and railway hub located close to the border crossing in Medyka. As the crisis unfolded, the site became the first safe haven for refugees where they could get warm and eat a hot meal. During this early stage of the crisis, AmeriGas Polska became the gas distributor of choice for WCK with a cooperation model based on providing LPG free of charge in accordance with the WCK's order from the pool of funds earmarked for this purpose. Once the influx of migrants stabilised, WCK returned to the standard operational model, shifting from the field kitchen to co-operation with local restaurants and chefs to provide meals for refugees.



Images provided by POGP.



Image provided by Gaspol.

# Accommodation and Heating

Refugees who managed to cross the border safely were often soaked and frozen. Despite the best efforts of border guards and simplification of procedures, sometimes refugees had to wait 48-72h for border clearance. Staying warm and finding shelter from the cold therefore became a priority. The LPG industry including Gaspol SA provided fuel free of charge for the LPG heaters. That proved valuable, as the war initially caused panic among Polish citizens and as the demand soared in March 2022 it became difficult to procure LPG cylinders.

Many employees of POGP member companies volunteered to assist refugees in finding shelter. Chemet SA went a step further. They not only arranged transportation for the refugees - relatives of its employees - but took full care of these people. Chemet provided them with full board, accommodation in buildings donated by the city and also provided financial and in-kind support, including clothing, cleaning supplies, schooling and teaching materials for the children. Many of evacuated families still remain in lodgings provided by Chemet.



Image provided by POGP.

## Funding

Many fundraisers have been organised to support those affected by the conflict. UGI International has created a \$35,000 grant to help Ukraine. In addition, they donated the same amount in LPG supplies to the WCK as part of their cooperation.

## Conclusions

During this humanitarian crisis, LPG has proven its value as an energy carrier that quickly and effectively delivers hope and means of survival to the displaced people. LPG has consistently provided heating and warm meals for refugees. The key advantage is that LPG enables fast deployment of relief facilities wherever they are needed, even without any pre-existing energy infrastructure.

While not restricted to these activities, key forms of LPG industry support for refugees included:

- transportation to a safe area,
- providing accommodation and heating facilities,
- catering,
- financial and in-kind assistance.

The cooperation of companies with NGOs and humanitarian organisations was crucial to effectively reach where help was needed. Involvement of the Polish LPG industry in assisting Ukrainians remains substantial. The LPG sector has shown unity and commitment to help refugees and Ukraine as a whole. Developed models and good practices of relief activities can serve in the future in similar crises, which we hope, however, will not occur.



Image provided by POGP.

## Contributors

- Polish Liquid Gas Association
- World Central Kitchen
- AmeriGas Polska Sp. z o.o.
- Bałtykgaz Sp. z o.o.
- Chemet SA
- DragonGaz Sp. z o.o.
- Gaspol SA
- GOK Regler und Armaturen Polska Sp. z o.o.

