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Europe/International

Solidarity partnership with Ukraine: First face-to-face meeting between Bocholt and Verkhniodniprovsk

Bocholt's mayor Thomas Kerkhoff and delegation attend conference in Leipzig // "Closely linked to Ukraine - providing help quickly and effectively"

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine continues unabated. Around three weeks ago, Bocholt's city council decided to enter into a solidarity partnership with a Ukrainian city. The city of Verkhniodniprovsk was chosen. Following an initial digital exchange at the beginning of the month, representatives from both cities have now met in person for the first time. Mayors Thomas Kerkhoff and Gennadii Lebid met in Leipzig.

The framework was provided by the German-Ukrainian municipal partnership conference entitled "Together for Europe: Solidarity, Reconstruction, Future Prospects".

The meeting took place in a "very trusting and open atmosphere", as reported by the Bocholt delegation, which included Kerkhoff, Jessica Wissing and Petra Taubach from the city mayor's office.

The Ukrainian mayor reported that although the city of Verkhniodniprovsk was not yet under attack by Russian forces, the war front was only 300 kilometres to the south. In addition to everyday necessities, medical supplies such as beds and diagnostic equipment were in short supply. There is a lack of minibuses for school transport, which are now being used as transport vehicles for the military. According to Lebid, help is also needed in areas such as drinking water supply and waste separation systems.

Based on a list of requirements, the possibilities for an initial aid delivery will be explored in the coming weeks. The list will also serve as a basis for acquiring funding. Volunteers from Bocholt will be involved and the existing aid structures will be utilised, the administration announces. Initial discussions have already taken place.

In order to remain in regular dialogue, the mayors want to hold regular online conferences to coordinate concrete steps to support the Ukrainian city. The administration will also convene a working group in which politicians and volunteers can get involved.

Both cities expressed their firm intention to enter into the solidarity partnership, to intensify relations, to support each other and to stand up for each other within the framework of the solidarity partnership.

Mayor Thomas Kerkhoff: "Bocholt is very keen to set an example of cohesion and solidarity with its Ukrainian partners. Standing closely united at Ukraine's side, we want to provide help quickly and effectively in this difficult time of war." At the meeting in Leipzig, he thanked all Bocholt citizens, volunteers and politicians involved in helping the people of Ukraine.





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Handshake: Mayors Thomas Kerkhoff from Bocholt (right) and Gennadii Lebid from the Ukrainian city of Verkhniodniprovsk meet in person in Leipzig. The German-Ukrainian Municipal Partnership Conference entitled "Together for Europe: Solidarity, Reconstruction, Future Prospects" provided the framework.