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Europe/International

Ukrainian delegation visits the fire and rescue station in Bocholt

Cross-border cooperation with Winterswijk strengthens solidarity with Ukraine

As part of a visit organised by the neighbouring Dutch municipality of Winterswijk, five guests from Ukraine - including some from the town of Berislav in the south of the country, which has been severely affected by the war - were welcomed to Bocholt. During a tour of the fire and rescue station, the delegation learnt about the local structures of the German fire and rescue service.

The visit focused on discussions regarding the organisation of fire and disaster management. Whilst the fire service in Bocholt is under local authority control, in Ukraine it is organised by the state. The accounts given by the guests from Berislav were particularly moving: the town, which has been directly affected by the war, used to be home to around 12,000 people; today, according to the delegation, there are only about 300 left. Large parts of the town have been destroyed. The guests from another Ukrainian twin town of Winterswijk, near Lviv, were particularly interested in local waste management and recycling. The town of Bocholt will provide supplementary information on this subject.

Solidarity unites across borders

"The reports from Berislav make it harrowing clear what the war means for the people of Ukraine. This makes it all the more important that we not only express our solidarity, but also bring it to life through concrete cooperation and mutual support", emphasises Petra Taubach, Bocholt's European Affairs Officer. Through its own Ukrainian twin town, Verkhodniprovsk, Bocholt has been committed to supporting the people of Ukraine for many years. This partnership has just been extended until 31 December 2029 by a resolution of the Bocholt City Council.

German-Dutch aid for Ukraine

The visit also highlights the close cross-border cooperation between Bocholt and Winterswijk. One example of this is the joint humanitarian aid effort: the Dutch initiative "Winterswijkse Uitdaging" collects relief supplies, which are then transported to Ukraine by the Bocholt-based association "Helfende Hände St. Josef Bocholt e.V.". In this way, the German-Dutch neighbourly ties are translating into tangible aid for the Ukrainian people.



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