

TRUMPF Hüttinger hires first 16 Ukrainian refugees in Poland

At TRUMPF Hüttinger in Warsaw, 16 new female employees who had previously fled to Poland from Ukraine began work on April 4, 2022. They come from the eastern war zones around Kiev, Donetsk and Kharkiv and will work in the future in the assembling of modules for control cabinets used in machines for industry. In this interview, Pawel Ozimek, head of TRUMPF Hüttinger in Poland, tells us how this came about, what challenges there were in integrating the refugees as new colleagues and that further recruitment is planned.

Mr. Ozimek, you hired 16 women refugees from Ukraine at TRUMPF Hüttinger in Poland. How did that come about?

Ozimek: "We are a rapidly growing company. In 2021 alone, we hired around 300 new employees at our location in Poland, and this year we plan to intensify this trend. When the war in Ukraine started, we decided to act immediately with many initiatives to help. We launched a group chat with our Ukrainian employees here in Poland to find out what was needed most at the moment and how we could best provide support. It turned out that one of the ways to effectively help is to hire refugees from Ukraine. We want to give them back some stability, including financial support, during this terrible time for them."

How did you select and hire the women so quickly?

Ozimek: "Our Human Resources Department is very busy. We had 35 new positions to fill for April. We invited at short notice around 20 Ukrainian refugees for a trial day. We needed to meet them and they wanted to know the details about the jobs on offer. Recruitment for assembly is always done this way: Candidates are given the task of assembling a module according to the instructions they receive. The foreman evaluates the quality of the work. At the same time, candidates can verify whether this type of work suits them. Almost all of them passed the test, were qualified and accepted. And as a result, they are now working for us. To complete the process, we have contacted an agency that specializes in hiring workers from Eastern Europe. They helped us handle the paperwork in the refugees' native language and assist our HR department with all the administrative and legal tasks required to hire refugees."

What jobs will the refugees do and what are you doing to integrate them?

Ozimek: "After an initial training session, the newly hired employees will start working in our location in Marki where we assemble the modules for the control cabinets. About 80 percent of all TRUMPF machines worldwide get their control cabinets from us. On a daily basis, the new Ukrainian employees are being supported by experienced process engineers and team leaders. They have an ear for any initial difficulties that may arise and make sure that everything works. After a few months, as a result of our regular skills evaluation process, the new colleagues can be offered a more specialized type of job. As for the communication, we already have some Ukrainian employees on board who are helping us a lot in integrating these new team members. In some situations, I also see the translation tools in use. We don't want new colleagues to have to work in isolation; we want to integrate them into the existing teams."

What's the next step?

Ozimek: "The first group of refugees joined us on April 4th. That was just the beginning: we already have 23 refugees confirmed for the next set of practice dates. And we plan to invite more. This may all sound like an experiment, and to some extent it is, but we at TRUMPF strongly trust in brave, new ideas. The reality of war made those people leave their homes and now forces them to try to normalize their lives under the new circumstances in which they have found themselves from one day to another. With a strong motivation to help on one hand, and with the consideration of the win-win aspect of the situation, the hiring of the refugees has become a part of our help policy for Ukraine."

What else is TRUMPF Hüttinger doing in Poland to help?

Ozimek: "At TRUMPF Hüttinger in Poland, we started helping right away - since the first day of the Russian attack, we have tried every means to support our Ukrainian colleagues and their families who were forced to leave their homes and their possessions behind. We have launched a collection of relief supplies and we help the families to get from the border to safe places. Some of our employees from Ukraine have decided to return to Ukraine and fight for their country. We understood this decision and fully support them in every way. In addition, we wanted to raise money for medical aid and supplies, fuel or transportation. That's why we launched two fundraising campaigns and collected over PLN 40,000, which is equivalent to about 8,600 euros in the first few days. Many employees are volunteering in their free time. Some have taken in refugees privately who have not been accommodated by family members or in other homes. Now we are supporting the local community with donations for the language courses and food for Ukrainian school kids in our town."



The Ukrainian employees work in production in Marki. TRUMPF Hüttinger manufactures modules for control cabinets there.
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