

Press Release

from the Peaceful Revolution Foundation, 19 August 2026

Town twinning even in difficult times – Leipzig residents travel to Kyiv

Leipzig's honorary citizen Gesine Oltmanns, from the Peaceful Revolution Foundation, has organised the second citizens' trip to Kyiv. Numerous meetings with representatives of Ukrainian civil society are planned.

Leipzig/Kyjiv.

To mark Ukrainian Independence Day, citizens of Leipzig are travelling to Kyiv. On 24 August, Ukraine celebrates its Independence Day despite the full-scale Russian invasion. In doing so, it commemorates its independence, which was first proclaimed in 1917 and restored 35 years ago, on 24 August 1991, with the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. Since 2014, Ukraine has been defending its sovereignty and has been fighting against Russia's brutal war of aggression for more than four years.

"Especially now, as attacks on Ukraine are on the rise again, we do not want to merely express our solidarity from afar. We want to meet the people of Kyiv, listen to them and show that the bond between our two cities is alive and well," said Oltmanns.

To mark Ukrainian Independence Day, a delegation of citizens from Leipzig will travel to Kyiv from 21 to 25 August to express their support and solidarity with Ukraine and the local people. The trip is being organised by Gesine Oltmanns, Honorary Chair of the Peaceful Revolution Foundation, with the full support of the City of Leipzig, the Department for International Cooperation, and the Consulate General of Ukraine in Dresden.

The experiences of the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 directly link Leipzig with the pursuit of freedom, democracy and self-determination. For the Peaceful Revolution Foundation, supporting Ukrainian civil society is therefore, in particular, a continuation of its commitment to these values.

Numerous meetings with representatives of Ukrainian civil society are planned. The focus will be on discussing the current situation in Ukraine; the role of civil society in local partnerships during wartime and the reconstruction process; the situation facing young people after more than four years of war; and the preparations and needs ahead of what is expected to be the next winter of war. **The highlight of the trip will be the citizens' delegation's participation, at the invitation of the Office of the President of Ukraine, in the official celebrations, the 'NATIONAL PRAYERS BREAKFAST' and the international forum '35 YEARS OF FAITH AND FREEDOM' on Sunday.**

The Leipzig delegation will also present a letter from Leipzig's Lord Mayor, Burkhard Jung, to the Mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko. In his message of congratulations on the national holiday,

Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung reaffirms Leipzig's solidarity with the Ukrainian capital and its citizens.

Mayor Burkhard Jung: "The war in Ukraine has now lasted longer than the First World War. For more than four years, the Ukrainian people have been fighting back against the Russian aggressor, at great cost to themselves. As a twin town, we have been supporting Ukraine alongside the German Government since the very first day of the war, and we will continue to do so. Over the past four years, we have sent aid supplies to Ukraine that are making a tangible difference to the lives of the people there: Fire engines, generators, civilian and medical aid supplies. Our solidarity with our twin town, Kyiv, remains as strong as ever."

Since 1961, there has been a close town twinning arrangement between the Ukrainian capital and the trade fair city of Leipzig. It is continually brought to life through mutual visits and joint activities. Just a year ago, in August 2025, a six-member delegation from Leipzig – which also included two representatives from the Peaceful Revolution Foundation – visited Kyiv to honour the Ukrainian struggle for freedom and show their solidarity with the people of Kyiv.

The delegation from Leipzig was received at the time with the utmost gratitude and warmth. The realisation that support from Germany – and in particular from the twin city of Leipzig – remains steadfast even in times of war gives the people of Ukraine courage and hope. This gesture of solidarity is of particular significance, especially in the face of increasing Russian attacks.

The following people are taking part in the Leipzig Citizens' Trip:

Dr. Gesine Märtens, Leipzig City Councillor, Member of the Federal Executive Committee of Alliance 90/The Greens

Prof. Dr. Beate Mitzscherlich, EuropaMaidanLeipzig e.V.

Gesine Oltmanns, Honorary Chair of the Peaceful Revolution Foundation

Siegbert Schefke, journalist

Regina Schild, Board Member of the Peaceful Revolution Foundation

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