



Maltez

ORDER OF MALTA
RELIEF ORGANIZATION
IN ROMANIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022

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Introductory word

The Annual Report is where we summarize the highlights of our work over the last 2 years. Through it, we transparently convey to the public, to our supporters, to our team all the efforts we have made to take the mission of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania to a new level.



Puskas Balint Zoltan
Knight of the Sovereign
Order of Malta
Honorary President of
OMRO Romania

This edition is all the more special because the pages you will read reflect an important period in our organization's history. In 2021, we celebrated our 30th anniversary and we would like to mark this with major actions, even at a time when we were hit by pandemic restrictions. We managed, in a single year, to inaugurate two new centers, the Malteser Centre at Micfalău and the Malteser Social Centre at Păuleasca, aimed at serving the poor.

One year later, in 2022, the work of the whole team has taken on a pace that is hard to imagine, with dozens of new initiatives and actions generated by the support we wanted to give to the people of Ukraine.

After 30 years, we can prove by our experience and results the importance of this service which today brings together 19 branches and subsidiaries, more than 1200 volunteers, about 200 employees and thousands of permanent beneficiaries.

We are the only charitable organization awarded the Order of Merit in the rank of Commander for social services to Romania. Over the years, we have had the honor of being visited by Grand Master Fra' Andrew Berti, whose beatification process

is underway, and Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing, a token of recognition of the results of our work.

The last two years have meant more work, more dedication, more help. I am proud to note that our volunteers and staff, especially young people but not only, have been among the first to come to the aid of those affected, demonstrating once again our commitment to the vulnerable. Many ask us where this dedication to those in need comes from? The answer comes from faith in God. Everything we do starts from loving our neighbor and this is the key to our success.

Personally, I have gone through the last decades with a lot of passion, enthusiasm and hope, whether as a founding member, president or honorary president of OMRO Romania. I have prayed constantly for the future of the organization, that the good Lord would send us young people who can take forward all that we have built. I note with great joy and satisfaction that this is happening and that future generations of Malteser will serve the same cause of unconditional generosity in which we have invested decades.

Thank you, My Lord!

30 years of charity in Romania

1990

Aid shipments of Malteser Hilfsdienst Deutschland, create the first informal network of Romanian volunteers in the organization.



1995

A future tradition is born at Dorobanți. The residential centre for adults here will host the annual work camp of the Malteser Youth.



1994

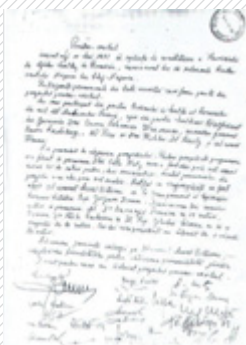
The first camp of the Malteser Youth is held at Valea Seacă, Cluj County and is today the most important event of the year for volunteers from all over the country. The Aiud branch is established.



1996

At Timisoara the St. Joseph's Home was inaugurated and services were launched for home care of the elderly. The city is the first to implement the Meals on Wheels project.





1991

Cluj Napoca – official establishment of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania. Next, opening of the first branches in the country, including in Sf. Gheorghe and Baia Mare.



1992

The first aid trainers training courses are held, this being today the basis of the network of the emergency response network.



1993

The Malteser Kindergarten opens in Cluj-Napoca, dedicated to children with neuromotor disorders, following the programs already developed for people with disabilities.



2000

The interventions on the occasion of the Danube Delta and Moldova area floods strengthen the reputation of the Malteser teams in crises intervention actions.



1997

Establishment of the Satu Mare branch, an organization that will grow spectacularly during the following decades.



1998

Residential center opens in Dorobanți, intended for adults with very serious disabilities



2001

The first social inclusion programs were launched in Satu Mare and Sf. Gheorghe.



2002

Young people with disabilities from all over the country, beneficiaries of the Malteser programs, are having their first dedicated camp, event which reached its 21st edition.



2016

Blaj becomes home to the first day-care centre for children with disabilities.



2014

“Women as a chance”, the program dedicated to the Roma community is launched in Sf. Gheorghe. It offers support to Roma women in redefining their role in the family and society, which will subsequently be extended to other areas of the country.

2018

OMRO Romania expands their range of programs with the first medical screenings in disadvantaged communities in country.



2005

Participation in the World Youth Day in Cologne with a first aid team.



2007

The first festival of the Malteser Youth.



2013

The night shelter opens, in Sf Gheorghe, a courageous and absolutely necessary project.



2022

Opening of the Tei Centre, dedicated to children from poor families, the second Malteser social center in the capital city.

2019

First aid teams and emergency responders take part in NATO EXERCISES. The “Mobile playground” hits the road, a project that will make thousands of children happy.

2021

Two new social centers open in Pauleasca, Arges County and Micfalau



Inauguration of the Social Center of Micfalău

Micfalău, a small village in the Covasna county, has become, during the last decades, a very important landmark in the annual activity of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania.



Every year since it opened, the program developed here has diversified, hosting camps for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, national meetings, courses and workshops for the organization's specialists or general assemblies.

The inauguration of the new multifunctional center in Micfalău in September 2021 has opened

up new possibilities for the whole organization. The building has a capacity of 30 places in 15 rooms, is fully accessible for people with disabilities, for whom a therapy room has also been created.

The first to enjoy the new space were the guests at the gala organized to celebrate 30 years of OMRO activity in Romania.



Programs for seniors in need

The quality of life of older people in Romania has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the proportion of the population aged over 60 continues to rise, their income levels and access to social services are falling. The needs of older people are complex, but beyond issues of health and ensuring a decent living, older people face the effects of being away from their families, many settled in other countries, and the lack of a circle that keeps them connected to society and gives them a sense of belonging, of being useful and of being able to contribute.

In this context, the actions that the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania has been implementing for 30 years in relation to the elderly become vital for certain segments of the population. The organization offers licensed services in several cities in the country, completed by other programs of its own, designed as a whole so that, once in the community of beneficiaries, every elderly person has exactly the right solution for them, depending on how their social and financial situation evolves.





121 724

hot meals
delivered in Cluj-Napoca,
Sf. Gheorghe, Târgu Mureș
and Timișoara in
the last 2 years

One of the longest running programs, **“Meals on Wheels”** manages to combine both the need to help elderly people on very low incomes to have a hot meal provided daily and to provide social services to those limited by their health condition. Started in Timișoara, the program has expanded over time to Cluj-Napoca and is now also running in Sfântu Gheorghe.



442

beneficiaries of the “Meals
on Wheels” program

In Targu Mures, after one year of the pilot project, more efforts are being made to find the necessary financial resources to continue it.

The volunteers who distribute the hot meals are also the ones who talk to the beneficiaries about their problems, provide them with help in dealing with doctors or state institutions and look for solutions to make their lives easier.





This type of **social service** is also extended to other elderly people living alone. In Cluj and Timisoara, 60 beneficiaries are constantly on the list of friends helped by volunteers. They are visited regularly, helped with shopping and household chores. With the launch of the “Helpline” project in Sf. Gheorghe, Sighetu Marmatei, Targu Mures and Satu Mare the number of seniors helped is steadily increasing.

Established in 1992, **St. John Home for the Elderly in Timisoara** provides a home and a family for 20 elderly people who receive permanent care. Although the average age is very old, life here has a rhythm that is far from boring. In addition to therapy sessions, organized activities cover the seniors' need to meet new people from different generations, keeping in touch with the world and the times.





Programs for active seniors

Seniors can be a generous resource in social activities and are open to sharing their time to do good, build new relationships and define a new role in society once they stop working. The Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania offers them activities tailored to their interests and a place for spiritual guidance. **The seniors' clubs** in Aiud and Târgu Mureș are places where the elderly celebrate important moments together, from birthdays to holidays, and where ideas are born and take the form of excursions or group theatre outings. Seniors, like the group in Cluj, also find themselves on pilgrimages and in the voluntary work that the branches carry out. In Arad, seniors



have distributed more than 700 packages for the needy in the last two years.

For the past two years, the Malteser have been celebrating **the International Day of Older Persons** throughout the country. In almost all branches, actions were organized for a week with seniors in the spotlight. They cooked together, went to the cinema or organized festive dinners. They were given a new reason to celebrate a status that society often tends to downplay.



I am 72 years old and have been involved in Malteser activities since 2008. I do it for the sake of helping others, but also because I like being present, meeting people and being useful. I believe that every elderly person can find meaning in what we do and I would like as many of us as possible to be involved.”

Bíró Katalin

Helpline

Less loneliness for the elderly, more community involvement to support them and make them look at old age with more optimism – Helpline was born out of a desire to reduce the number of lonely seniors or those who find themselves unable to cope even when it comes to simple, effortless tasks.

The project, launched in September 2021, is a natural continuation of the work Malteser volunteers were already doing for many older people. Most of the time, these were either people with special needs or on very low income. But there is also a very large category of elderly people who just need occasional help in certain situations. With no family or friends to be available, others just want a chance to socialize. Loneliness is often much harder to bear than deprivation.

“We also had a unique request, a grandmother who wanted very much to prepare pickled cabbage, but she was weak and couldn't do it herself. We helped, now we're friends and she's always calling just to see how we're doing.”

Hegedüs Boglárka, volunteer
Satu Mare





For each of the cities of Satu Mare, Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgu-Mureş and Sighetu Marmăţiei a special telephone line has been set up for seniors to call. The first month of the project was used to promote these newly created numbers. In food markets, pensioners' clubs, churches and areas mainly inhabited

132
seniors helped

by the elderly, volunteers distributed materials and talked to the elderly to explain what the Help Network can do for them. And not just for them. The materials targeted a wider audience so that the news could travel around the city and reach grandparents living in isolation, restricted by reduced mobility or wary of exposure during the pandemic period.

In parallel, the volunteer groups on this project have received special training in order to know how to respond as efficiently as possible and to be able to find the most appropriate solutions to each request. And the phone started ringing! The most requested services are those requiring help for elderly people who have difficulty getting around and need to be accompanied to a doctor or other institutions. Others are looking for friends and hope the network will put them in touch with people their own age. But people who want to help and offer their time and skills to make the lives of the elderly easier and more active have also called.

“A lot of the seniors who call us need to talk to someone, to feel they have someone to communicate with. There's a lot of loneliness around them, and we're glad we can change that.”

Larisa Şuţic, social worker
Sighetu Marmăţiei

Results 2021 – 2022

Sfântu Gheorghe: 70 beneficiaries, both elderly and disabled people for whom services were provided such as support for shopping, cleaning, help in paying bills, purchasing medicines, help in moving to another home. 90% of the calls are people who need help for a longer period. Volunteers involved: **26 volunteers**.

Satu Mare: 28 beneficiaries for whom **18 volunteers helped with shopping**, offered counselling and social assistance, went out with seniors for walks or helped with household maintenance.

Sighetu Marmăţiei: visits to the **11 seniors helped** included organizing physiotherapy sessions, support in dealing with some public institutions, telephone counselling for people affected by COVID or paying bills, all with the help of the 24 volunteers involved.

Târgu Mureş: the 23 volunteers helped 23 beneficiaries either by accompanying them to the doctor, providing counselling on different issues, providing transport to the hospital or shopping.

Programs for the Roma

The Roma minority continues to make up far too large a percentage of Romania's poor, but things can be changed. Every Roma child enrolled in school, every young person learning a trade, every adult learning how to make a better life for themselves is a step forward not only towards a more prosperous life, but also towards the social integration of a minority with a history and traditions that should be better understood and accepted by us all.

The Malteser centers dedicated to Roma programs are the best examples that perseverance and tolerance are the way forward in changing mentalities among both the Roma minority and the majority. It takes daily, diversified and tailored activities for change to become visible. In 2021, 80 children from disorganized, low-income families, living in precarious conditions or whose parents have no interest in their education and welfare received school and life education in the

social center in Satu Mare. Dozens more found support, help with their homework and a family in the centers in Diosig (Bihar county), Bucharest, Őrkő and Valea Crișului (Harghita county) or Păuleasca (Argeș county).

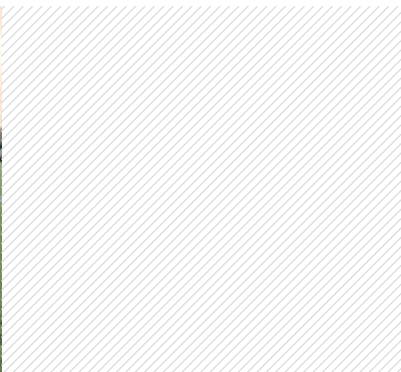
In counties with Malteser presence but without such specialized centers, the Malteser teams organize at least once a year actions which are mainly dedicated to Roma children. From the results of these, new projects are created based on the specific needs of

the community in question, as was the case in 2021 in the Valea Mărului neighborhood in Arad. Starting from the reluctance of families to enroll their children in school, Malteser volunteers started a pilot project of education through art and music, areas that have opened the appetite for learning of the little ones.

Community outreach projects, with an emphasis on quality-of-life education, from learning basic hygiene to skills that can even lead to employment, bridge the gap between Roma communities and the rest of society.

“Women as a chance” meant 450 individual counselling sessions for women, some of them future mothers, and 12 group activities in the “Chance for Family” Center in Őrkő in one year.



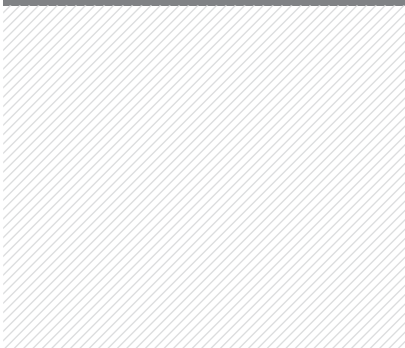


Education through sport

End of August 2021, a new project was launched with the support of UTA Arad Juniors. The club started training with 12 Roma boys from the community, providing them equipment and dedicated coaches



20 Roma children from Valea Mărului (Arad) received help with their lessons, their first steps in discovering mathematics or personal development activities. The main attraction was the drawing and music workshops, where they learned to play the accordion or paint.



In Valea Crişului, 22 children are taking courses of equestrian vaulting or riding, all with top results in national competitions. Two of the youngsters here have meanwhile reached high school and are attending classes special horse grooming classes.



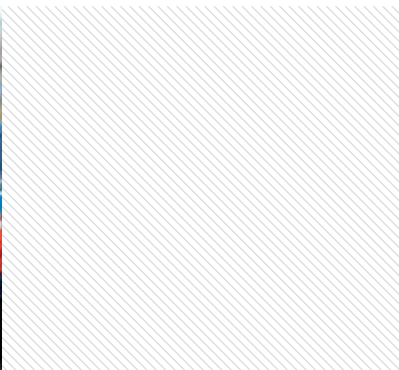
When I grow up, I will be a...

The chance to learn a trade early can change the course of a lifetime. In workshops such as furniture restoration, embroidery or tailoring, young people from the Roma community in Valea Crişului learn skills that can even become a career.





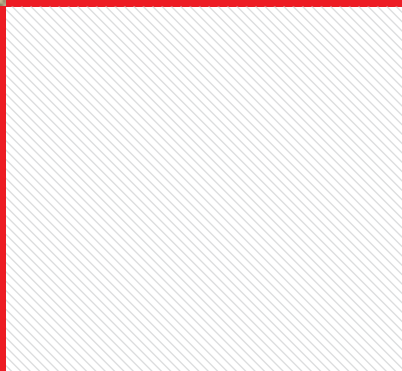
300 loaves of bread were distributed on Bread Day in the Fănațelor and Valea Rece areas, two very poor areas in Mures County where our volunteers always come back to help.



4 young people from Órkő went to Brussels to talk about their experiences in the Malteser social center and learn how to become future leaders in their communities.



The joy of summer brought to Roma children in Aiud with the Malteser Mobile Playground. A day full of socio-educational activities, ending with help with food parcels for the children's families.



The camps, even if only for a few days, are experiences that bring Roma children closer to the Malteser centers and give them new experiences.



1092 hours with the Roma in Șumuleu Ciuc

The year 2021 started with a tragedy in the Roma community of Șumuleu Ciuc: more than 200 souls were left homeless after a fire devastated all the houses in the community on the outskirts of Miercurea Ciuc. Malteser teams mobilized immediately: for almost four months, seven days a week, volunteers from all over the country were with the Roma in the sports hall where they were housed. From sharing food, to activities to make the days go by smoothly, to help with cleaning and hygiene, the volunteers became part of the community and began working with the families to help them get over the shock and prepare them for their return home.

With May 2021, when the Roma started to return to their homes, OMRO Romania started



a new project, implemented in partnership with the Municipality of Miercurea Ciuc. In Șumuleu Ciuc a permanent Point of Presence has been opened where the community can find support. Here activities are constantly taking place for the 70 children of all ages, the oldest of them receiving help to enroll in school and to be able to attend classes. Adults receive counselling so that their chances of social integration increase.

The construction of a social center that will take over all these activities is planned to be completed in 2023



Crisis situations intervention 2021

14 weeks

56 volunteers
from 8 localities

1092 hours
of volunteering



“The winner never gives up”

Ten years ago, Ruzsa Magor was noted for his talent and included in the Valea Crişului education program. Through the riding team here, the Malteser project helps children from poor families find their aptitude for school, using sport as a source of motivation.

It took months of counselling and discussions to convince him to go to school, but Magor has always relied on the help he received from the Malteser team.

Then it all came to an abrupt halt when the boy dropped out of school, having to work to support his family.

Social workers stepped in again and managed to find jobs for the parents, so Magor was able to return to school and training. Within a few years, he had placed second in the national aerobatics competition and made it to the national team.

Today, Magor is in high school helping out on the aerobatics team. His philosophy for the future? “There are two different types of people in the world: winners and others. Do you know what the difference is? The winner never gives up.”

Education for Health

Free health screening is vital in poor communities, especially when it comes to cervical cancer or HPV infection, where Romania has worrying statistics. Women in the community of Păuleasca were able to get tested in a mobile unit and received information on how to take care of themselves, even when access to healthcare is difficult. Fifty-four women took part in this action of the “Women as a chance” program, carried out in partnership with the National Institute for Mother and Child Health.





Tei Center for children in Bucharest

In one of the most expensive residential areas of the capital, a community of over 200 people lives in conditions that are hard to imagine. The families repeat the history of most poor Roma communities in the country. Illiteracy significantly reduces access to the labor market, children rarely go to school.

It takes a village...

For change to be on the long term, actions to support Roma need to be extended to all levels of a community. In Diosig, Bihor County, the program run in the last two years have included 100

families, targeting nonetheless all generations inside these.

For adults, the team mediated jobs and provided support throughout the employment journey. To increase their chances, literacy classes were organized. Teenagers, many of whom had left school early, learned how to interview, how to make a CV and what a long-term job actually means. Some of them were helped to attend driving school. The 37 children who receive daily help with their schooling have made significant progress both in terms of their schooling and in acquiring social skills.



In 2022, the second social center of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania was inaugurated here. Every day, children from the area come here to receive education and support to head to school. The activities are designed to whet their appetite for learning and discover that life has much more to offer them than they have at the moment.



About COVID-19 in Roma communities



“Inclusion of Roma communities through public health” was the project through which, at a time of explosion of COVID-19 cases in Romania, we chose to be with the Roma and help them. With the support of the National Agency for Roma, for four weeks, several thousand people had for the first time an open dialogue where they could express their doubts, find concrete answers and understand the real impact that COVID-19 can have on them.

Marginalized and vulnerable even in better times, the Roma population has been hard hit by the coronavirus health crisis. Without access to permanent health services and without being able to properly discern in the multitude of information available in the public space, the majority of Roma have remained far from any concrete action initiated by the authorities to support the population to overcome this crisis. Eleven months after the start of the national campaign, the number of Roma in poor areas who decided to get vaccinated was tiny. Apart from poor access to specialized centers or the lack of documents needed to get vaccinated, the Roma will always be very reluctant to accept anything from the authorities.

Four large Roma communities have been selected for this project, from areas where the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania has already built a permanent relationship with the people through other social



inclusion projects run here over the last decades. In order to be heard and followed, the advice had to come from people in the know, and it is the Malteser volunteers and staff who know the ropes and the rules that the Roma trust.

Örkő district, Sf. Gheorghe, Covasna County

About 1800 people live in the slumlike area within the municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe. The “neighborhood” is built on a landfill site and is considered by the population of the town “a hotbed of infection”.

Valea Rece, Tg. Mureș, Mureș County

Although only a few hundred meters away from a prosperous part of the city, the Roma in Valea Rece live in often makeshift housing without access to public utilities. Among blocks of flats or on the edge of the forest, nearly 1,500 Roma live here, half of them children.

Diosig, Bihor County

On the border between Hungary and Romania, the commune has more than 20% of its inhabitants living in marginalized areas. The community in Libertății Street consists of 450 people, most of whom live without access to public utilities and without a steady income.

Păuleasca, Argeș County

The village's more than 500 Roma inhabitants have the nearest family doctor more than 20 km away, inaccessible to the majority of the population who live from seasonal work or child allowances.





For a month, the Malteser volunteers involved in the action talked to residents and gave them the information they needed to protect themselves. The Roma were told about COVID-19, the vaccination campaign, and were given advice on what to do if they develop symptoms. Where family members could not be present at the group meetings, the Malteser team went from house to house and left hygiene packs in addition to information materials. Surface or hand sanitizers, masks, soaps, disposable towels – each material was provided with



“A wagon provided on the spot when we couldn't get to remote areas, help distributing materials, lots of questions – the Roma showed us that they want to be part of our campaign as long as they have a dialogue partner they trust.”

Rodica Rusu, coordinator of the project “Inclusion of Roma communities through public health”



the necessary explanations for their use. The “trusted people” in these very compact communities played a strategic role in opening the dialogue and highlighting key messages.

In all the campaigns of the organization, the beneficiary engagement part is strategic. Working together creates that sense of belonging and individual contribution on which to build, over time, a united community willing to help itself even without external input.

The Coronavirus awareness campaign was the ideal moment to bring back to life a constant problem in these communities, the cleanliness of public spaces. There is no health in filth, and the gesture of maintaining minimum civilized conditions must be in the habit of every member of the community, was the volunteers' message. From children to adults, people mobilized and collected hundreds of bags of rubbish which were then taken away by the sanitation services.



October 2021:

500

packages distributed

4

Roma communities

5 000

beneficiaries

8

awareness campaigns

54

volunteers involved

8

sanitation actions

First Malteser Center in Argeş



It takes a minimum of 10 years to bring about real and sustainable change in a poor and marginalized community, which is why the plans of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania are always long-term.

The inauguration of the first social service center in the Argeş County, in Păuleasca, is a major milestone in the mission that the organization has undertaken towards the 277 Roma families in the locality.

After more than 4 years of presence in the community, the desire to move to another level in the social services offered here is coming true with the inauguration of the Malteser center. The investment of more than 1 million lei means a generous and modern space for the more than 300 mothers and children with whom the Malteser team works. The new sanitary block, equipped with washing machines and showers, was a necessity, as families had

“A big step was taken when Romanian mothers, delighted with our programs, also wanted to take part in the activities, even though they had previously refused any contact with the Roma community. It’s a chance to reduce the distance between ethnicities, which still exists in the village.”

Anamaria Gărăgău, coordinator



no running water in their homes. Without it, health education programs were always limited and the community mentality did not encourage them. Also in the center, villagers receive advice on their health, have first aid kits and are supported in making arrangements for certain medical consultations at clinics or family doctors.

“I don't care what people say. For me it's a great help to come with my clothes to the laundry, to not have to stand with my hands in cold water, to have more time to stand with this little one.”

L. M. (local woman)



BRIEF HISTORY

June 2017

Malteser social workers begin social surveys of the 277 families in the community. Just as important as getting a true picture of the situation is gaining the trust of a community used to living in isolation.

January 2018

the “A Safe Start” program starts with the first groups of mothers with children up to 3 years old in several rooms of the local school.

December 2018

at the request of the mothers, the activities are extended to older children who need help integrating into kindergarten or school.

March 2019

plans begin for the construction of the Malteser social services center, which has become a necessity for the expansion of the projects.

September 2021

The first activities take place in the new center which also offers additional services through the sanitary block and medical consultations.

2022

After school and mothers' programs continue for the 6th year.

Programs for people with disabilities



We dream of an inclusive world, but we know that it will only be possible if each and every one of us makes a real effort to help those who struggle with disability every day. From the youngest ages to adults requiring special care, people with disabilities have always found support in the programs run by the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania.

From donations, we manage to cover the annual costs for 30 children with neuro-motor disorders enrolled at **the Special Malteser Kindergarten in Cluj-Napoca**. Their families cannot afford these costs, which are prohibitive in complex cases, when they are faced with not just one, but two or even three children with special needs.

Special therapies

- ◆ Physical therapy on the MIRA platform
- ◆ Melotherapy
- ◆ Animal-assisted activities
- ◆ 3°C therapy

6

therapists and
3 volunteers

30

children helped
for 11 months/year

9900

hours
of therapy/year

Symphony of Friendship

A unique event in Romania made its debut in 2022: young people of all ages came together in the first festival dedicated to inclusion – Symphony of Friendship. Theater, sport, animal-assisted activities and painting workshops were designed to allow young people of all abilities to participate and encourage them to spend time together.

It was an informal lesson in acceptance, empathy and equal opportunities for the whole community of Cluj. The organizers, the Malteser Kindergarten team in partnership with other associations, want to turn this festival into an annual project. It will also include other initiatives to support the integration of people with disabilities in social life and to overcome the prejudices they still face.



The development, recovery and happiness of atypical children also depends on their integration into society. Together we can learn to be more tolerant, we can learn from the stories of those who have accepted and integrated their disability, we will build stronger bridges between us.”

Mirela Codreanu, Malteser Kindergarten Coordinator

In Aiud, Blaj and Cluj, regular meetings of **groups of young people with disabilities** are opportunities for adapted activities, complemented by therapy sessions and group outings. Developing skills for independent living and preparing for integration into work are among the priorities. Families of young people are always involved and find support and information in these groups.

58

young people with disabilities in special groups

The care and assistance center for people with disabilities in Dorobanți, Arad County, has 40 beneficiaries living here on a permanent basis, surrounded by a dedicated team that has become their family. They are adults with a case history in the area of severe disabilities, who have found in the center a specialized place for care. The community built in the center is an open one and supports even poor elderly people from the commune, indirect beneficiaries of this generous resource.

The annual camp for young people with disabilities returned in physical format in 2022 after 2 years of running exclusively online. More than 20 young people from all over the country have lived together

40

adults in the assistance center

unique experiences, a boost and an inspiration to overcome their fears.

The Paralympics for children with disabilities, organized in Târgu Mureș together with the Hungarian Students' Association, was an excellent opportunity for interaction between young people with different abilities, but passionate about sport and very ambitious.





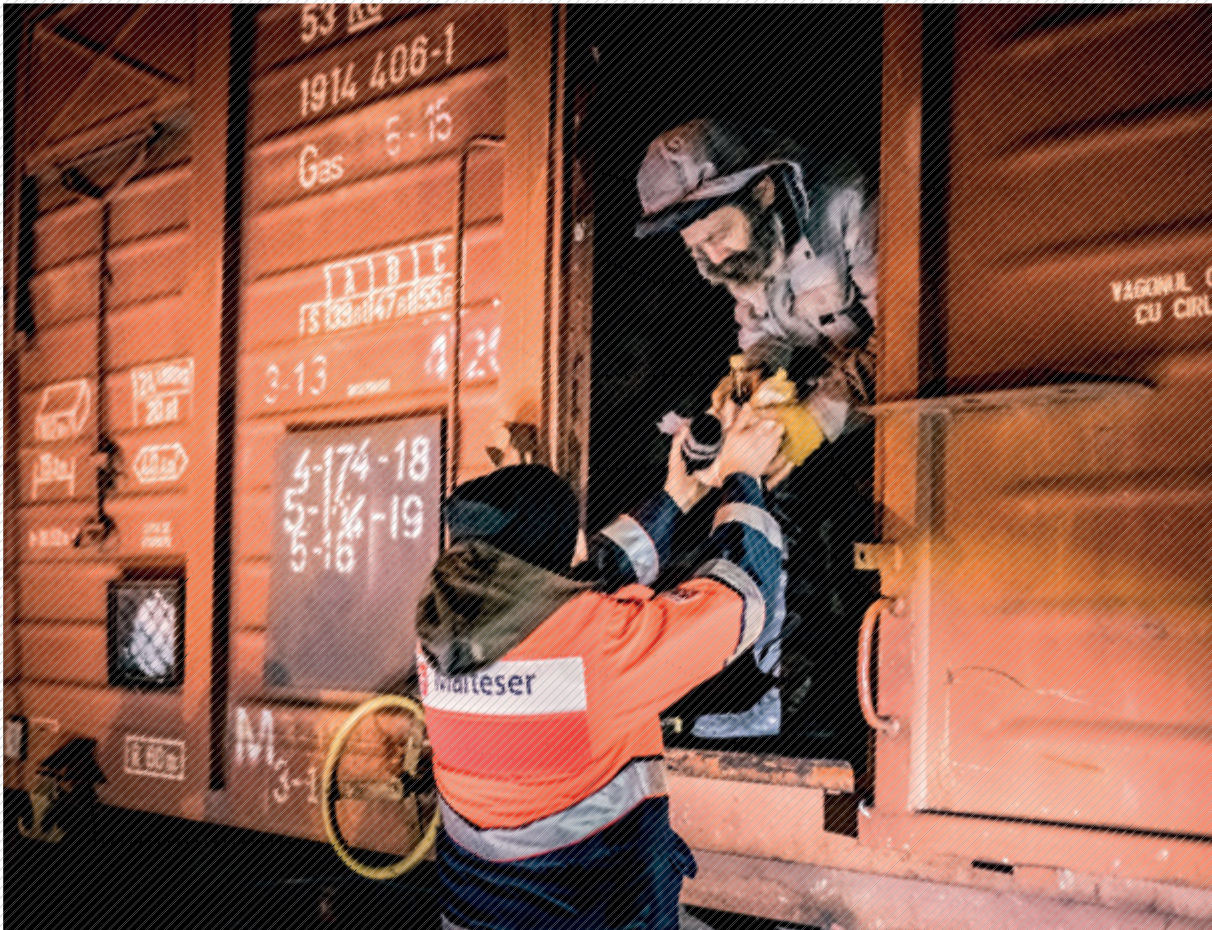
Alzheimer Café Braşov and Cluj

“Caring for those who care” is the slogan under which the regular meetings dedicated to dementia caregivers are held, a project born in Brasov in 2021 and extended to Cluj a year later. Social workers, professional carers, physiotherapists bring information and solutions for those who are in the position of being the main support for sufferers. Sharing common experiences helps them find answers and encouragement in the face of the challenges that serious illnesses such as Alzheimer's or dementia bring not only to sufferers but also to families.



Programs for vulnerable persons

Lacking the protection of a home, a steady income or the resources to protect their health, family and future, thousands of people depend on the prompt help of the Malteser teams. Their problems may be one-off or long-term, the solutions lie in constant liaison with these vulnerable groups and thinking about actions that give them equal opportunities.





World Day of the Poor

A new tradition in Malteser culture, inspired by Pope Francis' initiative and embraced by teams across the country. Organized every autumn, the action involves mobilizing, in a very short time, human resources and donations to mark a day dedicated to those for whom existence means, rather, survival.

Since 2021, marathons of good deeds have been organized in Sfântu Gheorghe and Satu Mare – for 24 hours, volunteers have reached out to poor families, people with disabilities and



homeless people and given them food parcels. In 2022, the marathon was extended to Targu Mures and the target groups included lonely people in hospitals, nursing homes and night shelters.



2021-2022 Summing-up

532
volunteers

867
families helped

9 cities

Arad, Blaj, Cluj-Napoca,
Pitești, Satu Mare,
Sfântu Gheorghe,
Sighetul Marmăției,
Târgu Mureș, Timișoara

A family for homeless people

Every evening, **at least 20 people gather at the door of the Night Shelter in Sfântu Gheorghe.**

They're not necessarily the same, but each one wishes that for one night the hours would pass more easily. For them, Malteser volunteers prepare dinner, a warm bed and activities to fill their hours at the shelter. In winter, their numbers increase, and volunteers know they need to add lunch to the menu because it's the hardest time of the year.

In Satu Mare, when the temperature drops below -7 degrees Celsius, **the “Heroes of the minus nights” are in action.** Volunteers prepare and distribute blankets, hot tea and food on the streets and try to gather as many people as possible to the city's night shelter.



More than 200 homeless people are identified in Timișoara, but the real number is much higher. The warmth of a home is replaced by the kind words brought by volunteers, along with the food and clothes they need.



Eye screening for 1,000 children

More and more children are being diagnosed with eye problems, but the number of children being screened remains very low, especially in communities with limited resources. Through a project cofunded by the Municipality of Sf. Gheorghe, **Malteser teams have implemented a screening project involving 1,000 children** in the municipality and the town of Baraolt. Two doctors and 54 volunteers were present in the 10 schools in the program. Requests to include a new generation of pupils in the screening are very numerous, and funding sources are currently being sought to cover a new action, with a very important role also in the prevention of more serious diseases.

Setting examples in the community

When was the last time you donated blood? **Volunteers from Timișoara regularly return to the blood transfusion center** to provide simple but much-needed help. Each time, they manage to convince new friends to join them.

Attention, Pedibus is coming! In Sfântu Gheorghe, volunteers accompany children to school in a project that aims to create healthy habits and increased mobility in the city. There are days when more than 350 pupils join the Malteser volunteers on the 11 preestablished routes, a challenge always ended with broad smiles.

A team of 9 Malteser specialists together with colleagues from other organizations **work in disadvantaged communities**, organizing medical screenings, counselling and support for people at risk, facilitating employment, preparing families for relocation to other housing and training in self-care skills. The aim of the Prospera Sepsi project is social inclusion and professional integration of vulnerable people.

28 080 servings for 129 unique beneficiaries – the Timisoara social canteen continues to be a source of hot meals for those with very low income.

Our favorite gift, whatever the holiday, is generosity: **thousands of packages are handed out at Easter and Christmas** to those who need the special days of the year to be filled with joy.



First Aid Programs



The year 2022 was a year of resurgence in first aid assistance and education activities, after almost two years in which the organization of events was limited by the context.

From rallies and cross-country races to indoor sports competitions, specialized teams of volunteers were on hand to ensure that the enjoyment of sport was not affected by possible accidents. Malteser teams have been recognized for many years for their expertise in rapid response, so requests are constant and always received with a desire to be of service to all those in need.

Continuous training is the key element that ensures the success and effectiveness of volunteer crews. 'Malteser for Health' is the project through which the organization develops common protocols and working procedures and organizes regular multidisciplinary training workshops. Volunteers in branches and subsidiaries not only develop their theoretical and practical knowledge, but also learn how to coordinate and work together.



The Malteser First Aid Team

8 trainers

30 volunteers

with a minimum of
5 years experience

300 volunteers

trained in 2021-2022

25 actions

developed in 2021 and 2022

Participating in international intervention exercises, such as the one organized by the Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine di Malta, allows volunteers to test new scenarios and strengthens the network of specialized teams within the organization.

The strategic partnership with state institutions involved in emergency management has proved particularly useful with the crisis created by the conflict in Ukraine. Collaboration over the past 20 years has helped to ensure that mobilization at the border is immediate, coherent and effective. Malteser volunteers have been able to provide first aid and medical services thanks to their expertise. Joint exercises with ISU crews have been constant in both 2021 and 2022.

Middle school students, high school students, college students or adults –

by age group and interest, activities introducing the public to first aid concepts are a priority for the organization. The largest program initiated in 2021 targets an entire and growing occupational category – bike couriers.

An old dream becomes reality. The introduction of first aid education classes in schools is taking shape. After a pilot program in 2021 at

the Baia Sprie High School, three other schools in Maramureş are introducing courses in the field. Nearly 100 pupils from middle and high school classes were able to opt to attend biweekly practical courses led by the 5 Malteser trainers. Along with first aid skills, students also learn how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, understand the importance of civic involvement and become empathetic to the needs of those around them.



First Aid on two wheels



Every year, 70 thousand Romanians die or are left with sequelae because they do not receive first aid in time after an accident.

The idea of turning bicycle couriers into people who can intervene quickly and correctly in the event of accidents could be one of the solutions to make these black statistics a thing of the past. 'First Aid on Two Wheels' is a joint OMRO Romania and Drop Courier project, initiated out of a desire to help communities manage their emergency services efficiently and be there for people when they are in immediate need.

Wearing white helmets bearing the Malteser and First Aid Riders insignia, the first couriers who have undergone the intensive course conducted by the organization's specialists can already be seen in the traffic of Cluj-Napoca. Each of them also carries a first-aid kit that allows them to provide everything from minor interventions (dealing with minor injuries, fainting situations, loss of consciousness) to first aid in

“Every day we see situations where we can intervene or we ourselves end up needing help. Knowing what to do protects us and gives extra meaning to our presence on the road.”

Halmen Balázs, Drop co-founder and graduate courier

80

couriers

case of cardio-respiratory arrest. If the situation requires it, the couriers know exactly what steps to take until the ambulance crews arrive at the scene.

The benefits of this project are spread over several levels. In the case of citizens, they receive immediate help and have a person with them

6 months

of implementation

who, in more serious cases, can provide clear and useful information on the spot to the ambulance services. In turn, they may be exempted from requests for minor, non-life-threatening cases that do not require medical intervention or transport to a specialized unit.

In the future, more than 80 couriers across the country will follow the first aid courses offered by OMRO Romania.

8

cities



Malteser Help for Ukraine



An unjust, unwanted and, above all, much longer war than anticipated, the conflict following the Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered a marathon of humanitarian needs that is still unfolding.

There hasn't been a day in the last year when we haven't stood by Ukrainians, refugees in transit or citizens who have chosen to stay at home, a test of mobilization passed with flying colors by all our teams. Present from the first hours of the conflict at the border, the Malteser teams started by providing immediate help to refugees crossing the border, offering social and medical assistance, transport or packages of immediate necessities.

644

volunteers

The Malteser teams were able to quickly adapt their response to the new needs that emerged as the conflict evolved. Over the past 12 months, the shelter built in each of the crossing points has become a place for psychological and emotional

counselling, with a special focus on children. In the dedicated play corner, OMRO Romania specialists organized activities and were able to assess the physical and emotional state of the children.

180 548

assisted refugees
February – December 2022

Stopped to receive food or sanitary products, the adults were also helped with clear information about their options if they wanted to stay on Romanian territory. The hours spent here meant for them a regained sense of security, physical and psychological regrouping and a clearer sense of what they wanted for the near future.

3

border points

(Sighetu Marmației, Halmeu, Siret)

The prompt and efficient intervention, the ability to provide mixed teams (translators, specialists, volunteers) and to collaborate with other NGOs and institutions, led to the Order of Malta Relief being designated by the government authorities as a member of the emergency plan coordination team in case of emergency situations at the border.



Aid Services at the border

578 tons of hygiene articles, food, other goods distributed to refugees.

First aid interventions and non-invasive medical services

Psychological counselling

Joining the Ukrainians back home

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians are refugees in areas close to the borders. Even though they chose to stay in their own country, they left everything behind and are now dependent on help from the communities that adopted them. But their resources are very limited. Lack of heat, limited electricity supply significantly reduce the quality of life of the refugees and



not only that, aid from humanitarian organizations is absolutely vital for the entire population here.



International coordination has been particularly important in the actions carried out in the neighboring country. OMRO Romania coordinated the collection, sorting, storage and distribution of donated goods from Romania, Germany, Italy and France and carried out 186 shipments to areas such as Beregovo, Kamianets- Podilskyi district, Solodvino and Steblika. Between February and December 2022, a further 21 humanitarian convoys were organized, totaling over 200 tons of aid distributed across the border.

All actions were carried out on the basis of recommendations from Malteser colleagues in Ukraine who managed and distributed aid to war-affected areas and local refugees.

Special aid was directed to Mahala, where there is a center for severely disabled children. Some of these children have been brought in from bomb-affected areas. Humanitarian shipments have been organized to support the center with food and sanitary products.





Intervention in the refugee crisis in Ukraine has been backed with support from:

- ◆ Malteser International
- ◆ Global Fund for Forgotten People
- ◆ Order of Malta Italy
- ◆ Order of Malta, France
- ◆ Federal Association of the Order of Malta USA
- ◆ OMRO Hungary
- ◆ Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta in Romania
- ◆ Order of Malta Association Romania
- ◆ Order of Malta – UK Association
- ◆ United Way Romania

Special projects for Ukraine

Mobile playground. Inflatable castle, sports games, balls, football goals, educational materials and lots of optimism – the Malteser minibus is already familiar to the children of Solodvino. The hours spent with the Romanian volunteers are an oasis of normality for them.



The mobile kitchen – a van, equipped with all cooking facilities, provides 300 meals a day. OMRO Romania developed this concept based on an analysis of the needs of these communities and managed to raise the necessary funding to purchase it.



Malteser Youth

95% of the activities of the Order of Malta Relief Organization in Romania are based on the work of volunteers and most of them are young, even very young. On their enthusiasm and empathy rests not only the future of the organisation, but of society as a whole.



When 18-19 year old students tell you that they have more than five years of volunteering behind them, you begin to understand why for Malteser Youth groups there is no “no way!”. The exercise of doing good, without expecting anything in return, is already in their daily routine. There are nearly 300 young people across the country who have chosen to volunteer with OMRO Romania and each of the results presented in this report includes their contribution.



The place where all these success stories start is with the children's groups. In Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgu Mureş or Satu Mare, children as young as 5 meet weekly and discover the world of generosity. The first tea or sandwich prepared for the homeless, the first carol at a home for the elderly, Easter presents for the less fortunate – volunteering



Through volunteering I learned from the people around me how active and enthusiastic we can be together”

Török Noémi Ágota

“I learn right from the people I help, and the lessons are about love, patience and kindness.”

Varga Dalma Veronika



The best experience for young Malteser remains the camp in Dorobanți, Arad County, where volunteers from all over the country come together every summer to help repair and maintain the center for adults with severe disabilities. For a week, young people become part of the team, learn how to care for a home and develop their relationship

with atypical beneficiaries, a new community and their own age.

In 2022, the reunion at the first post-pandemic youth camp was a blast! Workshops on various themes, sports programs, liturgical meetings united 60 young people in the same rhythm and dedication. 3 full days, memories for a lifetime!

becomes part of their routine and that of the adults they will become. “When I grow up, I want to be like you!” is the most common thing mentors hear from children.

300 members
7 cities



Youth for Care



A lesson in friendship, empathy and the need to find deeper meaning in everything we do – **Youth for Care** was born out of a desire to bring young Malteser volunteers together in an action that involved quick, efficient organization and a great desire to do good.

The whole mobilization was mainly targeted at elderly people with very low income, who were joined by other beneficiaries, disabled or in other vulnerable situations. To help them, young volunteers in 13 branches and subsidiaries across the country had to organize themselves and join forces so that, in just a few weeks, aid in the form of food parcels could reach the entire list drawn up following social surveys.

“It was the biggest action in my 8 months of volunteering. It gave me the opportunity to work with colleagues from other cities, plus discover Cluj for the first time. Volunteering is very different when you are directly involved, you feel differently when you are the one making things happen.”

Engi Nimród, 18 years old



800

food parcels



110

volunteers distributed
in 9 Romanian cities



50 lei

average value/parcel



Five of the Order of Malta Relief Organization branches were focal points, but each of these involved teams of volunteers from a much wider area. In these branches, young people met to shop for and prepare non-perishable food parcels, an average of 150 parcels in each of the centers. Then it was the young people who took the parcels to the beneficiaries and

had the chance to get to know them, understand their needs and see how they live.

The funds were provided by The Global Fund for Forgotten People, and a surprise donation of tons of potatoes from Satu Mare farmers completed the packages.

250

hot meals



Branch of the year 2022: Sighetu Marmatei

The pandemic was the moment that triggered a total transformation in the Malteser branch in Sighetu Marmatei. In the last 2 years, the number of volunteers has doubled, the actions have grown in scope and the impact in the community has become strong and long-term.

The team in Sighet currently includes teachers, nurses, cooks, psychologists, priests, students, pupils and workers. It is precisely this diversity of ages and experiences that allows a response to any call made by those in the community. A small community, where information circulates quickly, making it easy to identify social cases, but where expectations are high. The branch's addresses are constantly receiving reports of families in need, people are not indifferent to the life stories

of neighbors or acquaintances and hope to find a solution in the organization's projects.

The outbreak of war in Ukraine has tested the branch's ability to mobilize. It was a test passed with flying colors, with the team here present from day one at the border crossing, overwhelmed by thousands

of Ukrainian refugees. Mobilizing people and goods, using all the advantages of proximity – knowledge of the language of the neighboring country and of the resources available locally – the volunteers from Sighet were the basis on which the entire aid program for Ukraine run by OMRO Romania over the last year was built.



110
volunteers



In Sighetu Marmatei we don't have a Malteser team, but a family. A family with members from different generations, who you can always rely on for help and good advice. People who get to know us want and become part of our family.”

Lumiņa Colopelnic, branch coordinator



600

food parcels
distributed
(2021-2022)



“People for people”

Volunteers help with furniture, appliances, building materials and contribute with their own work to improve housing conditions for families in need or who have experienced a difficult situation (fires, etc.). Other families have been helped with the necessary wood to get through the difficult winters.



“Together for health”

Five beds were purchased for the Neonatal ward with funds raised from local sources. Donations of medicines and food were directed to families with difficult medical cases.



“A new chance for Casiana”

The 12-year-old girl's story touched the whole community, as volunteers managed to raise the money needed for therapies for Casiana's serious medical problems.

350

families helped
(2021-2022)



“School for all”

A project started in the pandemic to help children in family homes keep up with school even when physical classes weren't possible continues today. Twice a week, 30 youngsters are mentored by Malteser volunteers, who are themselves pupils, who help them with their lessons. The meetings are also an opportunity for socializing and new experiences for children without families.



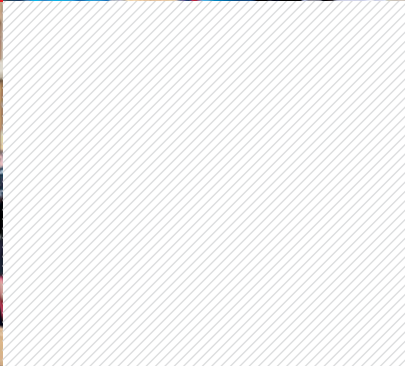
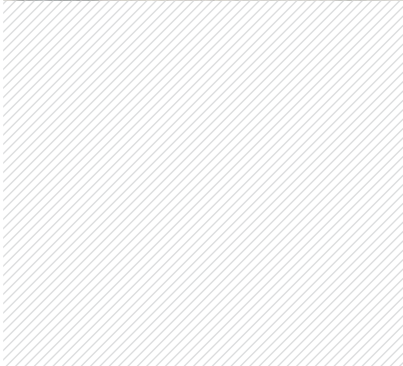
Faith



“

For the Order of Malta Relief Service in Romania, one of the fundamental elements is a close relationship with God. This is why the Church is that place where Christian love becomes tangible through our volunteers and members. In Christianity, based on biblical revelation, man is a complex being, made up of body and soul. Both elements are crucial, one cannot function without the other. It is the soul that shapes our human body, it is the soul that makes us human. This is why spirituality has been very important for us in the last two years: the spiritual exercises, the Sunday liturgy, the pilgrimages to Şumuleu Ciuc and Lourdes, the Way of the Cross during Lent, the connection with the local spiritual leader, have been and remain very important.”

Pr. Stelian Vereş, Spiritual Leader



The Order of Malta in Romania

Both in Romania and in other countries, the Order's activities have been redefined by the dramatic events of the last two years.

In 2021, the comeback year after the Covid-19 pandemic, efforts have been focused on providing the public with the right education on the safety and effectiveness of vaccination, especially in rural areas. Together with other selected NGOs, the Order contributed to improving

vaccination rates. This was also made possible through a series of high-level meetings with the Prime Minister at the time and with the leadership of the first aid system. Work also continued with the Royal Household to support the elderly.

The Embassy also facilitated the finalization of agreements with the Diocese of Bucharest and the Franciscan Order of the Sacred Hearts in Rome to open the second Malteser center in

Bucharest, dedicated to the care of disadvantaged children in the Lacul Tei area.

Beyond humanitarian activities, a constant presence at diplomatic and government events has been essential in support of promoting the mission, history and activities of the Order and the MASR

The year 2022 started with the traditional objectives of increasing relations with civil and religious



authorities, a correct information of the media about our Order and, of course, the celebration of 90 years of diplomatic relations between Romania and the Order of Malta. The invasion of Ukraine and the refugee crisis led to a reassessment of plans. The Embassy supported the Order's Relief Organization immediate efforts to set up reception and information points at the borders, to help set up an aid depot in Ukraine, in Beregovo, and to provide equipment in the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with the Order's embassies in these countries. The Order's network of ambassadors in the region has been a critical success factor in these activities. During two visits to Ukraine and one to Moldova, together with the Order's Relief Organization management, the Embassy was able to assess the difficulties and needs of the operators, subsequently contributing its own funds or donations to them.

The celebration of 90 years of diplomatic relations was marked by a joint philatelic issue, launched on the occasion of the feast of St John the Baptist. The new Grand Chancellor, ES Riccardo Paterno' di Montecupo, hosted a reception in Rome for Her Majesty Margaret, Custos of the Crown and HRH Prince Radu, and the Royal Household responded with a dinner in honor of the Order.

In 2023 we will continue to work, to pray all together for an end to the war and to finally focus on peace and reconstruction.



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POKA DENT • Association of Hungarian Farmers of Banat • Food Bank of the Timisoara City Local Council

Collaborators

“Sancta Maria Hilfe” Foundation, Timișoara • Build your career SRL • MM Jobs Trends SRL • Csiky Gergely State Hungarian Theatre, Timișoara • SCOP Society for Children and Parents Timișoara

- Support activities for the needy
- Malteser Youth
- Support activities for refugees

- Programs for the elderly
- Programs for Roma
- Support activities for the needy
- Programs for children
- Malteser Youth
- Support activities for refugees

- First aid
- Programs for children
- Malteser Youth

- Support activities for the needy
- Programs for Roma

- Programs for people with disabilities
- Programs for Roma
- Malteser Youth

- Programs for the elderly
- Support activities for the needy
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- Programs for the elderly
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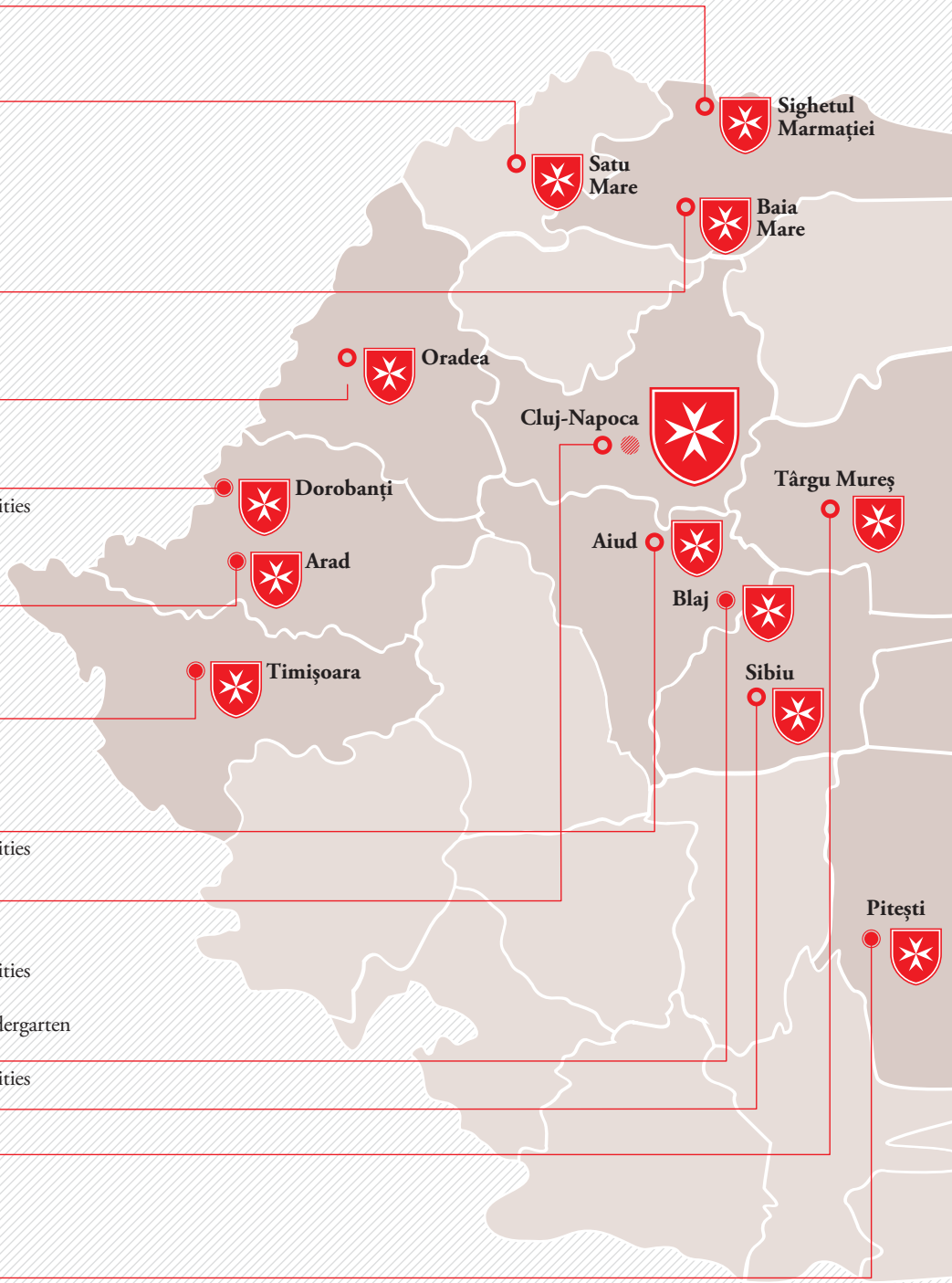
Work Point: Special Malteser Kindergarten

- Programs for people with disabilities

- Support activities for the needy

- Programs for the elderly
- Support activities for the needy
- Programs for children
- Malteser Youth

- Programs for Roma
- Programs for children





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● Branches

○ Subsidiaries

◌ Work Point

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