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## **Ukraine. 100 Italian activists leave for Kyiv: shelled children's hospital their first destination**

One hundred Italian activists from the European Movement for Nonviolent Action (MEAN) are set to leave today, Wednesday 10 July, for Kyiv on a new mission (the eleventh). The Italian delegation will find a bombed-out Kyiv, drenched in the blood of innocent children. The city is still digging through rubble after Russia fired over 40 rockets on towns and villages across the country on Monday 8 July. The regional administration of the Ukrainian capital reported at least 31 people killed and 117 wounded in Kyiv. But the toll is preliminary and is sadly expected to rise. Images of the wrecked 'Okhmatdyt' children's hospital in Kyiv, which made headlines across the globe, were met with shock and instant condemnation.



[. spokesman for MEAN. "In March 2023," says the spokesman for the European Nonviolent Action Movement, "we entered the underground wards where oncology patients were being treated." "It struck us as madness that children with cancer had to protect themselves in bomb shelters. The idea that someone would ever attack a children's oncology ward seemed insane". A partnership was formed that led to MEAN purchasing and donating a minibus, requested by the hospital to allow the children in long-term care to spend a few hours outdoors. "They were terrified, not only by the possibility of dying of the disease, but also by the war. Something had to be done to give them some hope. Yesterday, the rockets hit that hope". The bombing of Kyiv, however, highlights the urgency of the MEAN mission to the city. It will start with a visit to the scene of the disaster. "We are increasingly convinced that Europe should not only appear in the press, in the media, in the words of governments or the army," says Moretti. "It is absolutely necessary to be physically present to show closeness to the suffering population. The hospital, which is a sacred place for us today, is the first place we will visit when we arrive in Kyiv. It has always been sacred to us. It is even more so today because these children have suffered the ignominy and horror of an attack directed against them. Hatred can be overcome. But for that to happen, words are meaningless. Only a physical presence](#)

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can change the scenario.” **Italian Catholic Action, MASCI, MOVI, Base Italia, Vita, Salt of the Earth Network, Gariwo Foundation, Southern Project Community, Charity Networks and regional branches of the ANCI** are among the associations that have joined the MEAN 'mission'. The date chosen - as the promoters explain - is not coincidental: 11 July marks the religious commemoration of Saint Benedict, the patron saint of Europe, and the civil commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre, which began on 11 July 1995. The initiative is being promoted with the support of the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, Monsignor **Visvaldas Kulbokas**. It will be attended by representatives of the country's main religious denominations and the leaders of a number of Ukrainian associations. On Thursday 11 July, the group will meet with Scout associations in Majdan Square for an act of remembrance before the Ukrainian flags laid out in the square to pay tribute to the thousands of people who died in the war. At 6pm, the delegation will proceed to St Sophia Square, where a universal interfaith prayer will be held, which will be broadcast live in many Italian squares. On Friday 12 July, the delegation will convene at the Palazzo October, where a conference entitled "The Future of Europe Passes Through Ukraine" will take place. The main theme of the meeting will be the practical implementation of the "Civil Peace Corps". The MEAN volunteers pointed out that already in the year 2001 the European Parliament had underlined the need to create a European **Civil Peace Corps** with the aim of "coordinating the training and deployment of civilian peace experts at EU level to implement practical measures for peace". Today, the proposal is all the more relevant and urgent. **Lucio Turra** is a representative of the national presidency of the **Italian Catholic Action**, which joined the MEAN 'mission'. "We firmly believe in the importance of being there for the people, for those who are engaged in battle and for those who have been forced to emigrate abroad, for the people who are suffering from this war, which has sadly been marked by extreme injustice from the beginning and every day. Catholic Action has decided to give a concrete sign of solidarity, in line with the objectives that have emerged from recent assemblies. We are therefore acting within the framework of an alliance that we have been developing with MEAN for several years. The objective of this mission is very simple: to be present with the local population, to understand how they live and to be close to them." That is why Catholic Action supports the proposal for a Civil Peace Corps. "Ours is a very simple gesture. We have no ambitions. We look beyond what we read in the newspapers, beyond what politicians tell us. Our first objective is to be close to the people."

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**NON  
POSSIAMO  
PIÙ TACERE**  
FACCIAMO AVANZARE  
CON I NOSTRI CORPI  
LA FORZA DELLA VERITÀ!

# PREGHIERA INTERRELIGIOSA PER LA PACE IN UCRAINA

## SEGUI LA DIRETTA

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DIRETTA ZOOM VISIBILE SUL CANALE FACEBOOK MEAN



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[The Italian Scout world has been actively engaged in projects for Ukraine for some time. For example, MASCI has launched a project to welcome Ukrainian scouts to Italy. "By going to Kyiv," says Bertucci, "we want to show to the Ukrainian people that they are not alone, that we support them not only from a distance but also with our presence. We are there to bear witness, to tell them that we will not abandon them. The MASCI representative remembers a motto dear to the scouting world that says: "Leave the world a better place than how we found it now." "Obviously, with this war it may be difficult, but we will try to make Ukraine what it was before, a country of brotherhood and peace." Stefano Pescatore, member of the AGESCI Benevento 4 volunteer group, is among the departing activists. His participation in the MEAN mission - he points out - is in a personal capacity. "But being there at this moment is important for me," he adds. "Even if it doesn't solve the problem, we want our presence to send a message of closeness and sharing to a population living in an absolutely paradoxical situation, because it is not possible that in 2024 a war is raging a stone's throw from home and nothing is being done to stop it."](#)

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