

PRESS RELEASE

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“Right to Humanity”:

CMS Vienna Takes Action to Support Refugees

In the current refugee situation, it is the various initiatives that have been launched not only by the state but also by private individuals and companies that swiftly and unbureaucratically support the people seeking help in Austria. The staff and partners of CMS Vienna also decided to actively provide humanitarian assistance to refugees. In addition to donations in kind made to the Train of Hope organisation and money donated to the Caritas Omni.Bus, CMS initiated a campaign in which it donated time by giving free legal advice to refugees directly on site. Moreover, a charity concert co-organised by Christoph Wolf, partner at CMS, and his bandmates will be held at the WUK in Vienna on 7 November.

“The current situation calls for all forms of support irrespective of whether people donate goods, money or time. As a large law firm, we are capable and also keen to help in various areas”, says Gregor Famira, partner at CMS Vienna, who initiated the firm’s refugee support programme. “It is a key component of our initiative to encourage our staff members to make it part of their professional as well as their private life to provide aid to refugees”, adds Managing Partner Peter Huber.

€ 13,333.00 donated to the Caritas Omni.Bus in Traiskirchen

CMS also supported the Caritas Omni.Bus, which is located in the Traiskirchen reception centre and collects, sorts and distributes donations in kind, through a donation in the total amount of € 13,333.00. Over the past weeks, the Caritas Omni.Bus in front of the Traiskirchen refugee camp has become a central collection point in Greater Vienna.

300 hours of legal counselling at Vienna train stations

While elementary first aid is what refugees need when they first arrive at the train stations, at a later stage they also require expert knowledge. “We thought we should do what we are best at: provide legal counselling on site, in this case concerning asylum law”, says Peter Huber. The legal experts at CMS were released from their regular duties at the firm for the time they advised refugees.

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Over the past weeks, around 20 staff members of the CMS team volunteered to help on site, which made it possible to provide a little over 300 hours of legal counselling, not even considering the time the volunteers additionally dedicated to helping in their spare time. “I am very proud to see that our staff members do not only donate their time during working hours but also in their spare time”, says CMS Partner Christoph Wolf, who handled the internal coordination of this project together with the associate Daniela Krömer.

Legal experts who are usually not concerned with asylum law as part of their responsibilities also participated and made sure to gain in-depth knowledge in this field. “At CMS, we were impressed by the people helping on site, who sometimes push themselves to their limits and do not even refrain from aiding refugees during their holiday. Compared to that, our contribution is certainly modest”, says Christoph Wolf.

Charity concert for the benefit of PROSA on 7 November

Christoph Wolf, who specialises in labour and social law, is not only a partner at CMS. Under his stage name “Karl SplatZ”, he is also part of a rock band called “NAGELSTUDIO”. Together with his bandmates and two other bands, he will give a charity concert at WUK on 7 November 2015 for the benefit of a project called “PROSA”, which is short for “Project School for All” (8 p.m., minimum donation for entrance is € 18).

“PROSA” (www.prosa-schule.org) gives young asylum seekers (from the age of 16 onwards) the chance to complete compulsory schooling. The aim of the project is to uphold the “right to education” and thus help all those young people who don’t have access to the job market or to further schooling or professional training as they could not finish compulsory education.

CMS supports War Child: promoting the rights of children and young people

Another issue which is sadly gaining in prominence given the current situation in crisis areas concerns the impact of armed conflicts on children and young people. The NGO “War Child” (www.warchild.org) helps children and young people in war and crisis zones such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and fights for their rights. The CMS partner firms have so far supported “War Child” by means of fundraising projects and by donating a total amount of € 350,000.00 themselves. For this purpose, several partners, including Peter Huber, participated in a charity bicycle ride from London to Paris, which took place for three days in June of this year.

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