



Paliparan @PaliparanDotCom Fri Feb 25 20:24:16 +0000 2022

Bucharest Gara de Nord - waiting for my train to the historical region of Bukovina. Destination: The Romanian-Ukrainian border at Siret. <https://t.co/Y21WQTxjcb>



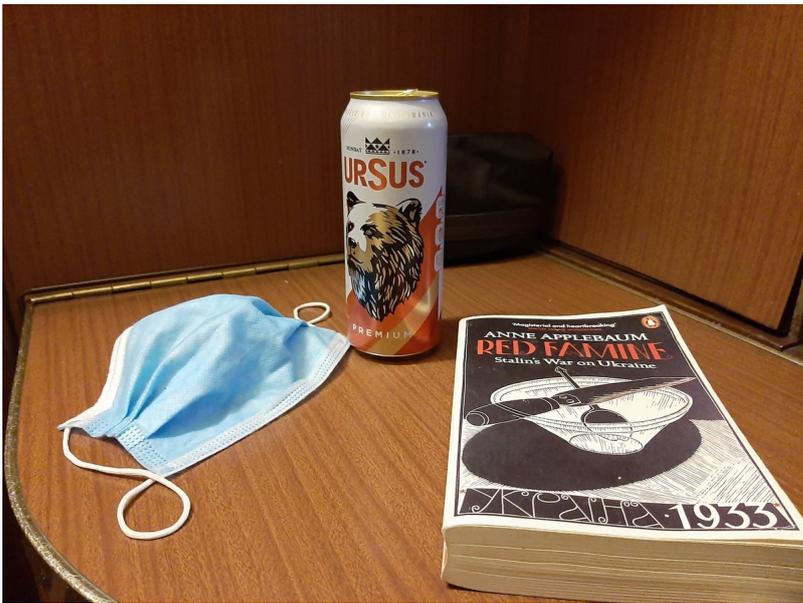


In case you missed it (unlikely) - I made an overview from everything which so far happened related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the thread below. Most of it is from a Romanian/Moldovan perspective (security, humanitarian aid, impact here)

<https://t.co/prEmE3MqDc>

Haven't slept much the last 2 days and a very early arrival means this will also be a short night. Quick nightcap while I read a few pages and off to sleep soon it is. <https://t.co/C6TkRrWiAp>





Romanian telecom provider Orange makes calls and text messages between Romania and Ukraine free for all customers and will provide free sim cards to Ukrainian refugees arriving at the border. <https://t.co/8Vht3M5LsN>

Comunicare gratuită cu Ucraina

Вільне спілкування з Україною
Free communication with Ukraine



UKR

RO

EN

Orange offers all their clients free communication with Ukraine

We are solidary with all those who have been affected by the Ukraine crisis. We want to help them communicate easily with the close ones and have quick access to information.

For communication with people in Ukraine: free calls and texts gratuite to Ukraine.

For people located in Ukraine: free calls, texts and internet in roaming

For people coming to Romania from Ukraine: free PrePay cards distributed by Orange representatives at certain border crossing points.

They will be present daily from 10 am – 4 pm and can be recognized by the Orange logo displayed on their clothing.

The list of border crossing points where the PrePay cards are available.

Україною для всіх клієнтів Orange

Ми солідарні з усіма, хто постраждав від кризи в Україні. Ми хочемо допомогти їм легко спілкуватися зі своїми близькими та мати швидкий доступ до інформації.

Для спілкування з людьми з України: Безкоштовні міжнародні дзвінки та SMS в Україну.

Для людей, які перебувають у роумінгу в Україні: безкоштовні дзвінки у роумінгу, SMS повідомлення та Інтернет

Для людей, які прибувають до Румунії з України: Безкоштовні картки PrePay розповсюджуються на певних прикордонних пунктах представниками Orange.

Представники будуть присутні щодня з 10:00 до 16:00 і їх можна впізнати за помаранчевим логотипом на одязі.

Перелік пунктів кордону дивіться нижче.

On the aims of the initial stage of the Russian offensive we are seeing:

<https://t.co/jporAL1jct>

As the night train from Bucharest arrives in Suceava at the ungodly hour of 4.20am, I remained on board until Câmpulung Moldovenesc at 6am, and now took the 6.30am train back to Suceava. Plenty of time to make the Suceava-Siret bus at noon. Cute station cat cheered up mood a bit. <https://t.co/sQ11JoagAB>





Romanian flight booking website Vola offers free travel for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Romania if they wish to travel onward to reunite with family or friends living elsewhere in Europe.

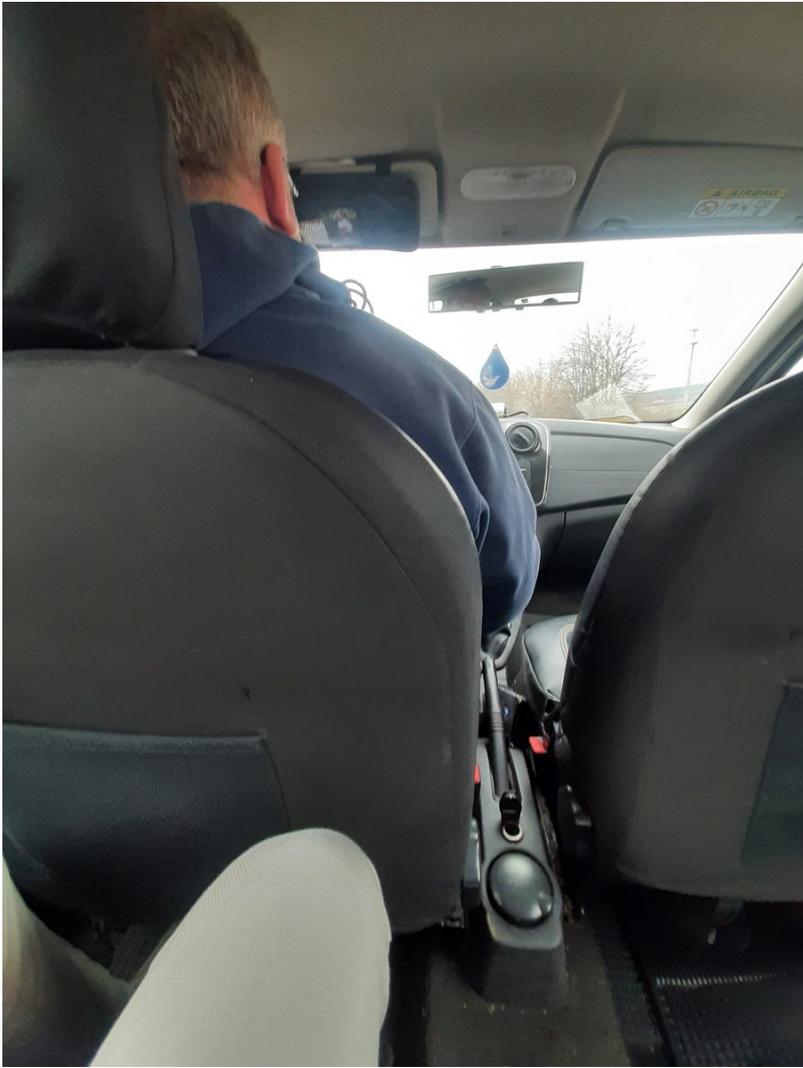
<https://t.co/ZLxg9Pjklh>

From the remote Itcani train station of Suceava it's a 30-minute walk to the newish bus station. Unfortunately my (online) information was incorrect and the next bus to Siret only departs at 4pm.. <https://t.co/tsTNPtrvgv>





Taxi it is, having to listen to arguments why NATO is as bad as Putin is for attacking Milosevic. <https://t.co/dn0pOIIIFE>



Former constitutional court president of Moldova fears his country could be "eaten as dessert" by Putin if Ukraine falls. Says that a list of puppet government to be installed is already circulating in the Kremlin.

<https://t.co/INgeqfMY1C>

<https://t.co/LnE9StbNeh>

The Siret border with Ukraine. It's chaotic but well organised at the same time - with dozens of NGOs and governmental organisations offering help to arrivals, from food to transport to medical and psychological aid. <https://t.co/Y2R5OGfGNg>





Miriam and her team are from a regional Christian NGO and hand out food to refugees, arrange transport and accommodation. They are here 24/7, working in 2 shifts of about 15 to 20 volunteers each. <https://t.co/C0A39C4mo2>





Just spoke by phone with former EU diplomat David Stulík, who just passed through the Siret border. He drove from Prague to Ukraine to support friends and colleagues in Kyiv when most embassies were evacuating. When the invasion broke out, he quickly left.

He said people flee in orderly manner, even though stressful with planes flying overhead and news of missile strikes on cities along route. Ukrainian men are stopped at the border by guards - he witnessed a harrowing scene of a husband forced to say goodbye to wife and kids..

Crossing border took him many hours. Many cars left behind on road as crossing on foot is much quicker. David managed however and his now on his way back to Prague, setting up efforts to help Ukraine from there.

Interesting little scoop: Eyewitnesses (diplomats - not at liberty to share names) reported missiles flying over them which were launched from Belarussian territory into Ukraine in close proximity to the Polish border. Lukachenko is as much complicit in this as Putin is.

David said he has warned about this since before 2014 & thinks Putin won't stop with Ukraine. Says EU citizens must make drastic sacrifices (eg living with fallout sanctions, skyrocketing gas prices) if we want to stop this. So far only Ukrainians make sacrifices - w their blood.

Car traffic seems to be resuming again.. so far has been only people walking across from the moment I arrived.

<https://t.co/FGg9lt59K9>







<https://t.co/FNKLGDM5YI>

This is Hashmi from India, who was studying medicine at the university of Ivano-Frankivsk. When war broke out, the Indian students came together to organise transport out of the country immediately.. <https://t.co/Yat3cvGsPb>



They managed to organise a private bus to the border, departing yesterday eve. Crossing the border took the entire night, waiting in the cold outside without anything to eat or warm up to. He described the scenes at the Ukrainian border as chaotic.

Hashmi and his friends said getting into Romania went faster, and they were grateful of the help they immediately received here, getting food, drinks and local sim cards..

He enjoyed life in Ivano-Frankivsk before the Russian invasion saying it was "very nice and peaceful". This however changed instantly overnight when war broke out. They were scared the last few days and only felt safe once they arrived in Romania..

They've been in touch with Indian embassy, which arranged a bus and flight back to India tomorrow free of cost. They will be contacted when the bus to take them to the airport will arrive - which is not known yet. If Ukraine will be safe again, they hope to return & finish study.

Ukrainians who arrive are women & children only, some holding their pets in their hands. Many had to say tearful goodbyes to their husbands, fathers and brothers across the border. <https://t.co/WwNczvdh0v>







At least they are now out of harm's way.. <https://t.co/xAUTRJaA1v>



This is a local NGO from the town of Siret itself. Normally, they focus on supporting impoverished kids, the elderly and cleaning up the local environment. When war in Ukraine broke out, they immediately agreed in their group chat that they need to come to the border to help.. <https://t.co/Bg7mW60VVs>



With support from the municipality, they hand out food, blankets etc to refugees (chilly 5°C here but feels colder). What's most impressive is that many volunteers are high school kids. I spoke with a 16-year-old girl who said it was their duty to help out..

She said: "The new Romanian generation is different. We are open-minded, feel the need to help others out & want to do what we can." Lots of her classmates are here as well, all out of own will. If these kids are the future of the country, then the future looks bright indeed.

Not sure what such a statement is worth (after all Putin, Lavrov et al. said as well Russia would never invade Ukraine) but at least it's not bellicose language..

<https://t.co/pFHDfPbuDV>

Romania following Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, United Kingdom by closing airspace for all Russian planes.

<https://t.co/PP211WWaCK>

This is the plane which will pick up Hashmi and his Indian friends. The Indian Government response has been excellent - with there apparently also being consular support right here at the border. Among other countries, also Israel has put that in place.

<https://t.co/2qPzrirYi9>

Looking over the Ukrainian border from the rooftop of The Frontier Hotel, which is now the homebase of the press corps and lots of consular staff, as well as a handful of refugees resting here for a night. <https://t.co/nMJmggv2SJ>



It has gotten quite a bit more organised in the 1-2 hours I was recharging my electronics inside the hotel. Fences have been placed along the road, tents put up, and the crowd of volunteers has grown even bigger with the arrival of a large NGO from Botoani. <https://t.co/T4GskkSgIK>





Also locals from the region who are not attached to any NGO have arrived to help out where needed and to show support. A lot of people felt the need to do smth, no matter how small. <https://t.co/TdQphlehjx>



A local driver offering free transport to refugees - anywhere they want to go in Romania. <https://t.co/ZEXSzzHcp8>



Romanian national airline TAROM adding additional capacity from the nearby airport of Suceava to Bucharest, with additional planes on standby if needed. Lots of refugees will travel to Bucharest, will fly from there to elsewhere in Europe, Israel, India etc. <https://t.co/UByGI8Mmff>

15:44 ❤️



Like



Comment



Share



TAROM ✓

34 m · 🌐



Dragi pasageri,

Vă informăm faptul că **suplimentăm capacitatea de transport** pe relația Aeroportul Internațional "Henri Coandă" București - Aeroportul Internațional "Ștefan cel Mare" Suceava, în contextul actualei situații.

Astfel, zborurile RO807 și RO808 OTP -> SCV (12:25 - 13:15) și SCV -> OTP (14:00 - 14:50) de mâine, 27 februarie 2022 vor fi operate cu o aeronavă TAROM Boeing 737-700NG.

Totodată, zborurile RO809 OTP -> SCV (21:45 - 22:35) și RO810 SCV -> OTP (05:20 - 06:10) de mâine, 27 februarie 2022 și poimâine, 28 februarie 2022, vor fi operate cu o aeronavă TAROM Airbus A318.

Menționăm faptul că avem în stand-by și o aeronavă TAROM Boeing 737-800NG, cu o capacitate de 189 locuri, în cazul în care este există o cerere mai mare pentru relația București - Suceava și retur.

👍 174

2 comments • 32 shares



Like



Comment



Share



A dozen local priests are also at the border. They arranged places to sleep at people's houses through their churches and are coordinating the effort from here. <https://t.co/tGf3Xx9kYH>



One of the priests just told me that they are now also sending vans into Ukraine to provide food, (warm) drinks and blankets to those waiting at the other side of the border. The queue was 17km this morning and its estimated that many need to wait up to 24 hours or more to cross. <https://t.co/nGvA3ZV2d9>



There is an abundance of people helping, as well as food & non-food supplies here right now. The challenge will now be to somehow get this done too at the other side of the border where it's needed much more, esp for people queuing on foot and not in the relative warmth of a car. <https://t.co/LPF4ipDmyc>



This apparently counts for ALL Ukrainian borders - so if you live in ■■■■■■■■■■ and want to help out, the best you can do is to get organised and somehow get food, drinks, blankets, baby supplies, toys for kids etc to the immediate other side of the border.

Meanwhile in Ukraine, Mariupol is fully surrounded and cut off by the Russian Army..

<https://t.co/8u71sASqkf>

Back here at the border in Siret, Hashmi & some 200 other Indian students are picked up by minibuses chartered by the Indian Government to bring them to the airport. They are enormously grateful for all the help and hope they can once visit Romania under better circumstances. <https://t.co/YKQ29YuDse>





The Romanian authorities still suggest people to use the Solotvyno-Sighetu Marmalei or Diakovo-Halmeu border crossings or to travel via Moldova, as both the border here at Siret as well as the Orlovka-Isaccea ferry are completely gridlocked.

Some more pics of Ukrainian refugees crossing the Siret border. The Germans, Indians, Italians whom I saw crossing were either joyful or tearful having managed to get out. Ukrainians all had a weary & worried look out of their eyes. They know this isn't the end of their ordeal. <https://t.co/fhwdx9O9a0>









In the evening the situation is much calmer at the border. Still people crossing over, but less volunteers waiting. However, there are enough remaining to hand out or help with whatever they need. Also still a few individual locals at the scene to welcome the people. <https://t.co/DBmg5r9UZp>





News from the other borders: At Sighetu Marmației a fully heated refugee camp has been set up in the stadium - but it will only be used when the number of arrivals will rise more.

<https://t.co/48K9TLm141>

So far, most refugees just transit through Romania on way to other EU countries, with the exception of those who have ethnic Romanian background. However, plenty of people gladly make use of the offer to stay somewhere for free (plenty of places still at ppl's houses, pensions).

Interesting interview with a Suceava priest who has been aiding refugees at the Sculeni border with Moldova. Mihai Cobziuc speaks Ukrainian, having studied theology in Kyiv..

<https://t.co/qWyf5ENI8s>

Quote: "I have never seen such a great tragedy and so much suffering in my life. It's just what my grandmother told me what she saw in wars (...) I have never thought about it, it is unprecedented for me and I think for all my contemporaries."

On the Danube border (Orlivka-Isaccea) some 1,000 people entered Romania from Ukraine, among which even ppl from the faraway Comoros islands. Many want to move on to Germany/Austria. Also in Isaccea people hand out free food, accommodation, transport.

<https://t.co/VKx90ehMkT>

That's all for today about the refugee crisis on the Ukrainian border & the humanitarian aid effort by the Romanian people. It's been a long day, and haven't slept much for the last 3 days to begin with. Much-needed Guinness in the pub of the border hotel and I'm off to sleep. <https://t.co/NtuQdxHSr1>



<https://t.co/Wo8HyHHv9O>

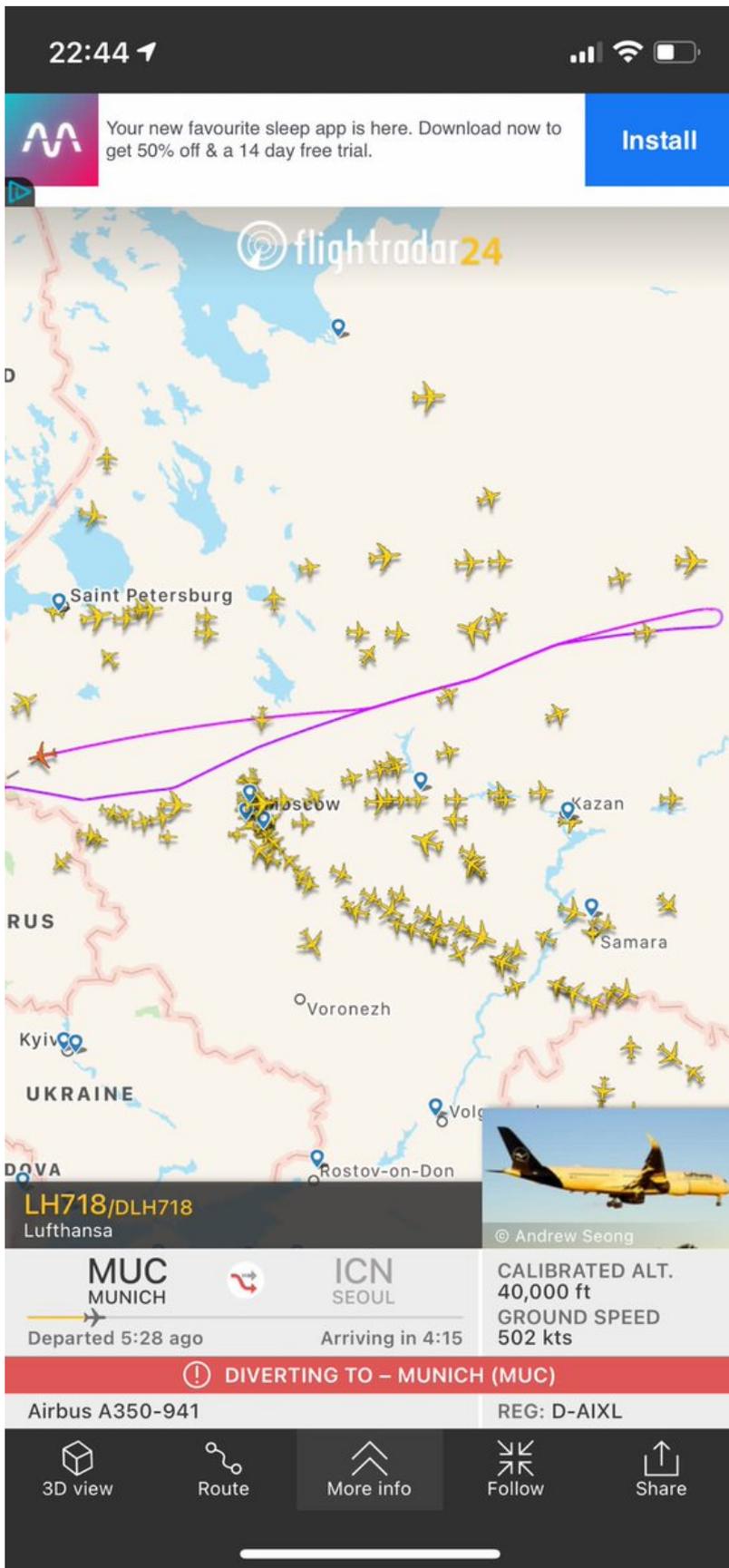
The ADR (German public broadcaster) has a scoop that the entire EU will soon announce a total flight ban for Russian planes over European airspace. This is also why EU-registered commercial planes are now forced to turn around flying over Russia..

<https://t.co/ykZVq4HjaM>

In retaliation, Russia will of course ban planes from EU/NATO states flying in Russian airspace. We might get back to Cold War aviation times, when flights from Europe to East Asia took a westerly route with refuelling stop in Anchorage, Alaska!

Lufthansa to Seoul Incheon was forced to turn around back to Munich for example while flying over the Urals.

<https://t.co/w5XfY7a6C2>



A quick article to explain it as I needed to finish my second pint anyway. Really time for some shuteye now.

<https://t.co/pXor4EE2rU>

Morning at the Siret border between Ukraine and Romania. Much calmer than yesterday with volunteers and locals, but still enough people to help out with free food, transport, accommodation. Some 20+ fire brigade buses arrived too - not sure yet what they are up to. <https://t.co/ssgRaiGS6m>



What I wrote yesterday about missiles which were clearly launched from Belarus into Ukraine has now been confirmed by no-one else than Lukachenko himself. Note: What I've heard from sources who witnessed it, this happened very close to the Polish border.

<https://t.co/gKsCFNw6aD>

If you cut off Russia from SWIFT and progress with lots of other sanctions against Putin, this also has to be done against Lukachenko and his Belarussian regime.

Bottles of "Putin huyl" (Putin D*ckhead) beer from Lviv's Pravda brewery used as molotov cocktails.

<https://t.co/X9v3KjYrud>

A Ukrainian friend has been queuing at Siret since 11am yesterday.. Waiting times at the Ukrainian side are really getting out of control. If you want to cross or know someone planning it, please use the Solotvyno-Sighetu Marma \blacksquare iei or the Dyakovo-Halmeu crossings further west. <https://t.co/8gbVHwQVz2>



Quote about the situation at the Ukrainian side: "There were local people providing tea and some food. Lots of people were going by foot and honestly I hope there is help and shelter for them next to the border. The night is cold and there were lots of kids walking."

And another update at 11am, being 24 hours at the Ukrainian border: "We are still in queue and today is almost not moving. I have no idea why but for last 3h we moved not more than 200-300m. So there is a chance that we are here will be even till tomorrow morning."

Reportedly some footage from the chaos in front of the queue on the Ukrainian side:

<https://t.co/IKYezcnprn>

Hearing both firsthand here at the border and on Twitter reports that the delay is partly due to increasingly volatile situation and chaos on the Ukrainian side, with some Ukrainian men trying to cross and forcefully turned back.

<https://t.co/k0QEAKtKtt>

Also from my friends somewhere halfway in the queue I hear the same: "I assume that the issue on UA side is because there are lots of men trying to cross the border. Every second car is with a men inside."

Note: Foreign men can cross freely -- Ukrainian men are forced back!

If someone is at the Ukrainian-Polish border: It would be great if these online/Twitter reports can be confirmed. If true, it's absolutely appalling behaviour from the Polish border guards and something must be done about it.

<https://t.co/JPLgTsXv0D>

I suddenly get a lot of reports of Poland keeping out fleeing Africans, only letting Ukrainians/westerners pass through... fortunately no such things at Romanian borders - saw & talked to many African, Indian, Arabs crossing! But one to watch...

<https://t.co/9r0VW9McL5>

Also I've heard reports of Hungary turning away people without passport. If that's the case, you can cross into Romania without! (Although any other ID card will make it a lot easier, without any ID whatsoever you can still cross but likely be transferred to asylum centre).

Seems the accusations of racism at the border should be directed to Ukrainian border guards, not the Polish ones. Again, not all facts about this are clear, but given the stories I've heard about chaos and incidents on the UA side I wouldn't be surprised.

<https://t.co/3VIqw0K7Cf>

<https://t.co/f1pZC1abfB>

Something to cheer up the mood a bit:

<https://t.co/wLwYA9NDFM>

Time to head back home - first a 45 minute walk from the border to the town of Siret. It has both been an extremely sad situation hearing of the tales and seeing the fleeing people, but also heartwarming to see the response of society and the kindness of hundreds of people. <https://t.co/nWd020Q0UR>





Another outtake is that while many refugees clearly have their route planned knowing where to go, and others have great help from their government (India, Israel) so don't need to arrange much themselves, not everyone is this lucky..

Spoke with several Ukrainians who want to reach family in countries like Greece & Germany but who didn't know how to move on from the border, many also having budget constraints. Although they can get help with much, the support at Siret was sometimes also overwhelming for them.

Nothing but good things to say about the Romanian support, but I hope some (on government level?) can be more pro-active with this. Standing with a sign free accommodation and transport is awesome ofc, but some refugees also shy/overwhelmed/not always comfortable asking for help.

That means approaching everyone and asking if they are fine, if they need food, accommodation, and where they want to go. And helping them get there or at the very least explaining it to them how you can best reach it, what the costs are, where it can be booked.

Into the town of Siret.. <https://t.co/p6277X2J0Q>







..which has one of the oldest medieval Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately the entrance gate was locked, so could only have a peak over the wall. <https://t.co/o5AvgxDdcf>



evreiești din România.

The Medieval Hebrew Cemetery

The Medieval Hebrew Cemetery has a high historical and cultural value due to its ornamental tombstones. The decorations include religious motifs, geometrical symbols and animal and plant symbols (lions, birds, as well as imaginary animals). The oldest gravestone dates from 1560 as this cemetery is one of the oldest in Eastern Europe. Most common motifs are: the lion, the bird, Menorah (candelabrum with seven branches), tree of life, hands of blessing, Torah.

The tombstones are both evidence of a strong Jewish community in medieval times and the cultural level of this community. These stones are among the most beautiful Hebrew funerary monuments in Romania.

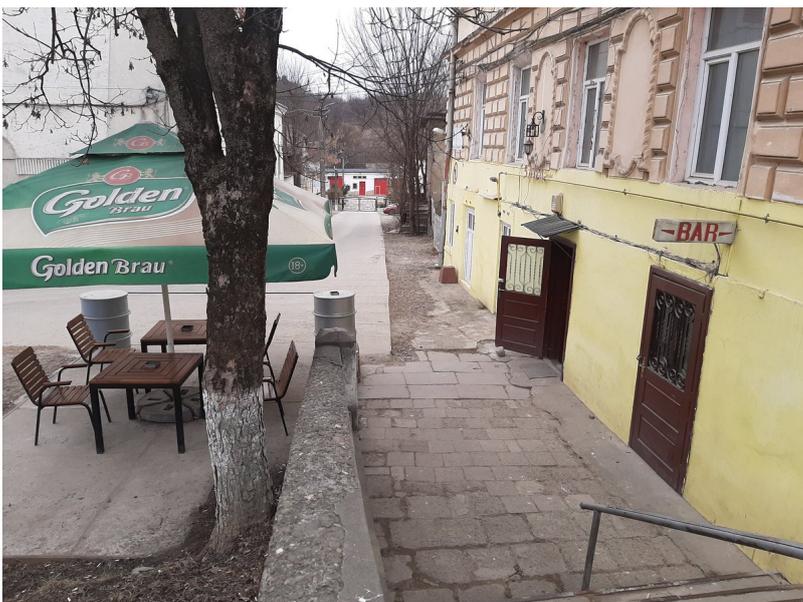
The Joint Operational Programme Romania - Ukraine - Republic of Moldova 2007-2013

Valorisation of the touristic potential of Siret-

The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013 is financed by the E



3.5 lei (€0.70) beer with the locals in an old-fashioned little bar and the sole Sunday minibus to the main regional city of Suceava arrives.. <https://t.co/SZEGOlxWJc>







Suceava's main Burdujeni railway station. Also here, a counter has been set up to give free food and drinks to refugees and provide them with support. On my train to Bucharest lots of Africans who have been studying or working in Ukraine and now want to return home. <https://t.co/r8oZba98co>





Departing Suceava. A big thank you to all volunteers in this wonderful region of Romania for helping out. I will take a little break from posting on social media but in case there are any updates of the situation in Romania/Moldova re Ukraine I will ofc share it. <https://t.co/la8znIFPT5>

PS. Haven't been able to reply to each and every comment as the last days have been extremely busy and demanding. In case anyone wants to know more - and esp. in case someone needs help fleeing to Romania - I'm more than willing to share info and help out (please send a PM).

Interesting article about Putin's latest little provocation - and fully agree with what should be our response to it (spoiler: just ignoring it).

<https://t.co/RhkqetB6le>

A great little thread w overview for refugees fleeing from Ukraine to Romania, including legal rights & useful FB groups, links. However, ignore the third post of the list of border crossings as not all are open (4th Tweet in the thread has it correct).

<https://t.co/dNCs0WgjLZ>

Another addition, the waiting times at Romanian border police website are for the Romanian border only! They don't tell the story how long the wait is at the Ukrainian side - which is where the long waits are. Handy tool, but not for current UA-RO travel.

<https://t.co/YZbPNluuVi>

Seems the situation on the Ukrainian side of the border with Romania is deteriorating rapidly. After reports of Africans being beaten by Ukrainian guards at the Polish border and being sent to the back of the queue, now the same is happening to Indians..

<https://t.co/YEzaxhAPgN>

Another video of what looks like excessive violence against Indian students fleeing Ukraine and them being sent back by Ukrainian guards..

<https://t.co/85cFMLQdAa>

Catching up on political news - I'm still surprised by it all. Germany increasing military spending by €100b & considering keeping nuclear plants open longer? Sweden sending weapons? Turkey's response in this is also great and deserves a special mention.

<https://t.co/zuNbZypf1a>

Whatever the outcome of this war is & whatever peace terms hopefully will be agreed on one day, the geopolitical ramifications will be huge. I'll repeat it again: Even if you think it's a distant conflict and you don't particularly care about it, your life will be affected by it.

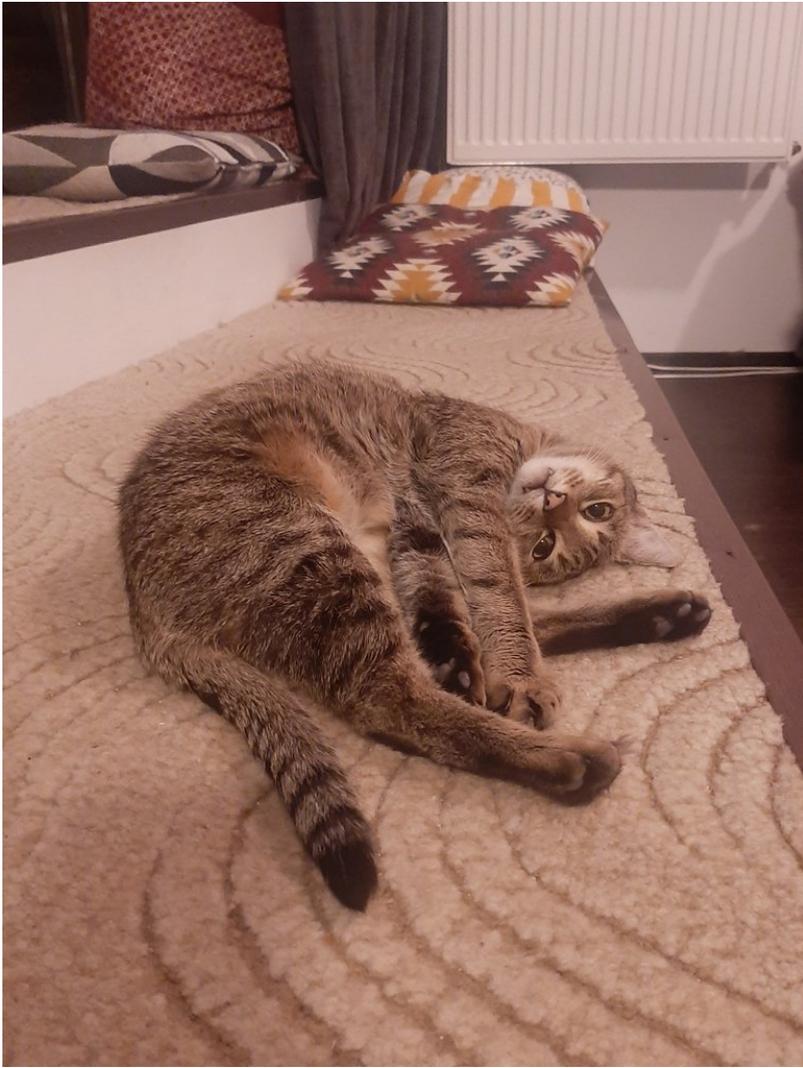
Back at Bucharest Gara de Nord, where to my pleasant surprise there are dozens of volunteers awaiting the Suceava train to help w free accommodation and onward transport. Also huge police presence on the platform.

<https://t.co/YacExOiuTq>



And back home, having the luxury of a roof above my head in a safe city with two sweet cats at my side. Goodnight!
<https://t.co/6hY1tkoeaF>





If you want to hear some interesting background analysis on what's going on now from one of the best experts on Russia, listen to Mark Galeotti's podcast if you have 30 minutes to spare. It's well worth the time!

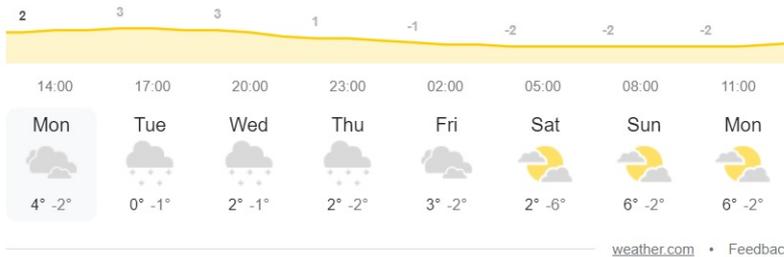
<https://t.co/ea7RiCE0v6>

Woke up to see it snowing outside my window in Bucharest! Not really spring arriving yet - and also at the Romanian-Ukrainian border snow and freezing temperatures are predicted.. <https://t.co/C0nhOW3m9O>

2 °C | °F Precipitation: 1%
Humidity: 54%
Wind: 14 km/h

Siret
Monday 13:00
Cloudy

Temperature | Precipitation | Wind



Although everything has been taken care of at the Romanian side of the border, I hope that in the next days the necessary humanitarian aid will be in place at the Ukrainian side as in Siret there is still a queue of well over 48 hours in order to cross - and most are pedestrians!

I do hope this this is also destined for the people waiting at the other side of the border.. but great to see.

<https://t.co/E31ZrYFWwn>

<https://t.co/0elwxpFvva>

Highly interesting: The reason why the Siret border crossing was temporarily closed on Saturday and why it's moving so slow is a data-wiping malware attack on the Ukrainian border post.

<https://t.co/SL9ZABcZKS>

My Ukrainian friend has now been queuing for 48 hours with the end still not in sight - although things are improving a bit: "We are still queuing. Yesterday we've done just 1km within 24h. Today the situation is a bit better - at least we are moving slowly but surely."

For military analysis of the Russian invasion, this podcast with [@KofmanMichael](#) is great. Summary: Yes, Ukraine is fighting brave and heroically, performing better than expected. Russian tactics failed, being overly optimistic & having unrealistic goals..

<https://t.co/u3MiXzMf8F>

However, the war is only a few days old, there are lots of Russian forces still not deployed & they will probably change tactics to smth more familiar to what soldiers have trained for. Which will be a lot more brutal, with lots more civilian casualties. Might get a lot worse..