

ATG: WAR IN UKRAINE NECESSITATES SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL TRAVEL COMPANY TO A PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION OFFERING FULL HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO A FRIGHTENED, DISPLACED POPULATION

ATG assists hundreds fleeing the war-torn country, securing travel and offering information and assistance.

Utrecht, Netherlands, May 23, 2022 – While a horrified world looked on, Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. The aggression caused Europe’s largest refugee crisis since World War II, with more than 5.8 million Ukrainians fleeing the country. As a global leader in business travel and provider of services in Ukraine, ATG Travel Worldwide, B.V. was immediately cast into the fray, not only helping its clients relocate, but also serving as a source of information and aid to the population at large.

Anna Petrova, the founder and owner of BTL Group in Ukraine, joined the ATG global network of independent and market leading travel management companies in 2019. Six months after affiliating with ATG, the COVID crisis began in earnest, curtailing travel everywhere. As 2022 got under way, however, the travel industry had begun to rebound, and travel was picking up worldwide. Then the war happened.

“In the travel business, we are always meeting challenges, but the Russian invasion created a situation we had never faced before,” said Petrova. “Suddenly, there was widespread panic, and we started to receive requests for help fleeing the country from our clients and other Ukraine-based businesses. Only half of our Ukrainian team remained in place, and despite the difficult circumstances – sirens and alarms continually going off – and the physical danger of gunfire and bombs exploding, we worked from our homes, basement shelters, and any other place we could set up a laptop and connect to the internet.”

In the early days of the war, Petrova and her team managed logistics for clients and, since flights were cancelled, arranged travel by bus or train. But it was soon apparent that non-clients, people with no assets who were afraid and did not know whom they could trust, needed assistance, as well. Traveling on foot was the only option available to many. However, long lines prevailed at border crossings into neighboring countries, and sometimes it took 24 hours to get through. The Ukrainian arm of ATG provided vital information, securing transportation when possible, suggesting the least busy routes out of the country, and offering connections to organizations dedicated to helping displaced persons.

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Alin Patru, a business development manager for ATG Romania and Republic of Moldova, provided support to the ATG team in Ukraine. "I contacted colleagues in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Germany to update them on the situation and discuss ways we could help," he said. "We began by helping employees and families of our ATG business clients relocate, but we soon became a major source of extraction information for other TMCs who also needed reliable information for their operations in the area. Social media proved to be a tremendous asset. We compiled information on the quickest routes out, as well as the countries and organizations providing health services, assistance to the elderly, childcare, and other situations that needed special attention."

As the conflict in Ukraine continues, there is no return to normal for ATG. Transportation costs have skyrocketed, and it is sometimes impossible to find drivers to motor people out of the country, or back in. Many companies have, of necessity, closed shop in Ukraine and relocated elsewhere. Some of these companies are important to the travel industry, resulting in additional obstacles to 'business as usual' for ATG. Yet Petrova and her diligent team continue to log on to their laptops every day. They look for options to help ATG clients who wish to return to Europe or to Ukraine, they volunteer to help where they can, and they continue to use social media to send and receive the information they need to do their jobs.

"I am immensely impressed with and extremely proud of the outstanding work that our ATG affiliates have done – and continue to do – under the most difficult of circumstances," said Tammy Krings, Chief Executive Officer of ATG. "They have the support of all ATG offices worldwide, and our pledge that, as a global company, we are fully committed to delivering not only the best, most comprehensive travel services in the industry, but we recognize the need for patience and understanding as we face the many challenges offered by this situation. We pray, as does the world, that hostilities will soon end."

About ATG

ATG Travel Worldwide, B.V., headquartered in Utrecht, Netherlands, is a global travel & expense management leader and a technology product powerhouse, offering a revolutionary combination of high touch service and innovative and proprietary robotic booking solutions, centralized global quality control, data management insights, a true global user platform and a suite of human resources products. ATG is also a global international franchise of market leading travel management companies. ATG offers regional, company-owned offices in The Americas (USA), Europe/Middle East/Africa (Frankfurt, Germany) and Asia Pacific (Shanghai, China) and franchise partner offices covering 140+ countries with 7,800 global employees and a worldwide turnover representing over \$7.2 billion.

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