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War in Europe / Russia's attack on Ukraine

We dedicate this issue to the Ukrainian refugees and their relatives who are holding out in their homeland and defending the freedom of their country and also the freedom of Europe. The information on this is therefore also our top topic.

Along with this full English translation, there is a PDF of the print issue on our website, and there you find also summaries in Ukrainian as well as in Arabic (<https://steps-fhi-ev.de/steps-ausgaben/>).

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Civil war in Ethiopia, a dictatorship in Eritrea

In Tigray, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is fighting against the central government. Since the annexation of the Gonder region in 1994, there has been conflict over the Ethiopian province, which escalated into a bloody civil war in 2021. Thousands of people have been killed, many have had to flee. Millions of people are threatened by hunger.

Dictator Isaias Afwerki has ruled Eritrea since 1993. Compulsory military service and severe human rights violations drive many young people abroad. There is no free press. Even the peace treaty with Ethiopia has not brought any noticeable improvement.

An Interview with Ukrainian war refugees: Larissa and Veronika, a teacher and an educator from Kiev, arrived on 11 March Idstein and have since settled quite well to life in their new surroundings.

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Escape from Ethiopia - because she spoke her mind

K., a young woman from Addis Ababa, has been in Germany since 2010. She describes why she came here and how she has fared here. She had fled her home country because she had distributed flyers of government opponents. Only through her father's connections was she able to avoid a prison sentence, but she was forced to leave Ethiopia.

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Afghanistan: first home, Germany already the second

Wais Maarij is from Afghanistan and has been in Germany since 2013. He is married, has two children and works at a bank. He describes some cultural differences such as habits in greeting, eating and punctuality and the challenges of the German language.

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Volunteering: The Tafel in Taunusstein, the Integration Scouts and the Hospice Movement

Roswitha Kaczmaczyk and Melanie Weber report on the work of the volunteers at the Tafel in Taunusstein-Bleidenstadt: The Tafel provide food for people with a tight household budget. They also ensure that food that is no longer saleable but still perfectly good is not thrown away, but collected from supermarkets.

Volunteers are busy collecting and distributing. There are two food banks in the Rheingau-Taunuskreis (in Taunusstein and Idstein).

The Idstein integration scouts present their work.

The Idsteiner Land hospice movement accompanies seriously ill and dying people on their last journey and helps grieving relatives. It also helps to draw up living wills and health care powers of attorney.

Hospice companions who can support patients with a migration background in their mother tongue are still being sought. Would you like to support the hospice movement? They are happy about every new member! The minimum monthly contribution is 2 Euros. Would you like to use the services of the hospice movement? Do you need help or advice? This is possible at any time!

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Knowledge:

Two German holidays: Every year on the 2nd Sunday in May is Mother's Day to honour and thank mothers. The Christian holiday of Ascension Day is also Father's Day in Germany. Fathers like to use it to get together without their families and spend time with other men.

A useful herb: The Garlic rue is a spice and medicinal herb that smells faintly of garlic. It is often found by the wayside.

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Health: COVID and PIMS

COVID with fatigue and a wide variety of symptoms. It is a heavy psychological burden. There is no effective therapy. The best way to prevent infection is through vaccination.

PIMS is a serious illness of children that can occur as a consequence of a SARS-CoV-2 infection. If there is a sudden high fever, it is important to think about it today - even if COVID was only mild or was not recognised at all. If left untreated, the disease is very often fatal.

Should children be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Children are at risk from the rare PIMS and Long COVID. They are also sources of infection for vulnerable people who can become severely ill. A COVID vaccination, on the other hand, is much less dangerous. Scientists therefore recommend vaccination from the age of 5.

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Learning German and further education for women

Some figures of speech and idiomatic phrases.

Rüdiger Zimmermann explains some of the **difficulties of the German language**.

Ildikó Szelecz informs on **new courses in the programme "Women get ahead"**.

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The page for kids

The editors recommend **a funny children's book**: „The Day Grandma Broke the Internet.“

An interview with a girl from Khmelnytsky, Ukraine.

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News

A Persian cooking event in Taunusstein in May, tips on saving energy, a scholarship for school graduation, the search for old laptops and PCs. And who can support FHI as a driver?

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Tips: Contracts

A contract is quickly signed - revoking or undoing it is not easy. That's why you have to be careful before signing anything:

- ▶ Don't sign anything at the front door or on the street!
- ▶ Don't sign contracts you don't understand. Read the small print!
- ▶ Compare offers and read what others say about the providers.
- ▶ Be careful with your data, especially when paying online.

If you have problems, you can also get help from the consumer advice centre:

www.verbraucherzentrale-hessen.de

The litter problem

There is too much rubbish lying around on the streets and pavements, in the parks and residential areas and even in the woods. Some dog owners apparently think that you can leave the droppings where they are put.

Any ideas on how to tackle this growing problem and how to stop litterers from dumping their waste in public places would be greatly appreciated!

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steps cooking

Syrian cuisine – twice stuffed courgettes and two delicious starters: Kusa al-Mahshi, Sheikh al Mahshi, Hummus bi Tahine and Tabbouleh.

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steps Humour:

Here are some jokes about "Fritzchen" (little Fritz). He exists all over the world, but is called differently in each country. In Russia for example "Wowotschka", the little Vladimir. And Wais Maarij tells a funny anecdote from Afghanistan.

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steps crossword puzzle

War in Europe

... and once again people are on the run

Once again people have to flee war and destruction - this time from a country in Europe. Most of them have found refuge with our neighbours in Poland, but more and more refugees from Ukraine are also arriving in Germany, most of them women and children. In the Rheingau-Taunus district, there were about 1,300 people in the second week of April, about 180 of them in Idstein.

The willingness to help in the Idsteiner Land is great. Idstein associations, companies, business people and many citizens as well as private initiatives are collecting donations, offering housing and helping the Ukrainian refugees to arrive here and find their way around.

The schools make sure that the children can attend classes and settle into a normal everyday life. The authorities have created extra points of contact and try to make the process as unbureaucratic as possible. For example, refugees arriving in Idstein no longer have to go to the district administration in Bad Schwalbach to register with the Foreigners' Registration Office and the Migration Service, but can do so at the new branch office next to the JobCenter in Idstein.

The initiative "Idstein hilft Ukraine" (Idstein helps Ukraine) has built up a functioning network in no time at all, linking helpers and refugees via various WhatsApp groups and organising pretty much everything from housing offers to furniture to baby clothes. The clothing and material warehouse of the Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V. was open daily in March and April and, thanks to the many donations in kind, is able to provide the arrivals with the most essential items.

Ukraine: Chronicle of a war foretold

Russia's attack on Ukraine

(sbo) **It began with a civil war. Since Russian troops invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022, there has been war in Europe. More than four million people - most of them women and children - have fled the war zones. More and more of them are also seeking protection in Germany.**

- ▶ 1991: After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine becomes an independent state.
- ▶ December 1994: Budapest Memorandum - Ukraine pledges to give up its nuclear weapons in return for a pledge of its political and territorial integrity from the USA, Russia and Great Britain.
- ▶ November 2013: Protests against the pro-Russian government begin on Maidan Square in Kiev.
- ▶ February/March 2014: Pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich is overthrown, Russia annexes Crimea.
- ▶ April 2014: Civil war: pro-Russian separatists take over territories in the Donbass (Donetsk and Luhansk).
- ▶ May 2014: Pro-European Petro Poroshenko becomes President of Ukraine.
- ▶ September 2014: First Minsk Agreement between Ukraine, the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia and the OSCE.
- ▶ December 2014: Ukraine ends its neutrality and paves the way for NATO accession.
- ▶ July 2014: A Malaysia Airlines passenger plane is shot down over separatist territory, presumably by a Russian missile. 298 people die. Sanctions against Russia are tightened.
- ▶ February 2015: Second Minsk Agreement - The "Normandy Format" (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia) agrees on a ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and autonomy for the separatist areas.
- ▶ 2015 - 2018: The Minsk Agreement is broken almost daily, according to OSCE data.
- ▶ May 2019: Pro-European Volodymyr Zelenskyy wins election as president of Ukraine. Russia issues first Russian passports to residents in separatist areas.
- ▶ Spring 2021: Russia sends tens of thousands of soldiers to the border with Ukraine. After massive protests from the West, they are withdrawn again.
- ▶ November 2021: Russian troops march on the border with Ukraine, allegedly for "manoeuvres" with the Belarusian army. Russia denies attack plans and accuses Ukraine and NATO of "provocations". President Vladimir Putin demands security guarantees from NATO and the USA.
- ▶ January/February 2022: The search for a peaceful solution through intensive diplomatic negotiations between Western states and Russia comes to nothing. The USA warns of a Russian invasion of Ukraine before the end of February.
- ▶ Mid-February 2022: The strength of Russian troops in the border area is now estimated at almost 150,000 soldiers. Fighting in eastern Ukraine has started again.
- ▶ 18 February 2022: The separatists in eastern Ukraine announce that they will evacuate residents of the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk regions to Russia.
- ▶ 21 February 2022: Putin recognises Luhansk and Donetsk as independent and sends troops to these areas. The West strongly condemns the violation of international law and threatens harsh sanctions.

- ▶ 22 February 2022: USA and EU impose tough economic sanctions against Russia. Germany stops Nordstream 2.
- ▶ 23 February 2022: Ukraine declares a state of emergency and partial mobilisation.
- ▶ 24 February 2022: Russia starts war: Putin launches attack on the whole of Ukraine with planes and tanks. Ukraine declares a state of war and mobilises all the country's military forces.
- ▶ Status 20 April 2022: The Russian army has wreaked immense havoc in the cities. The battle for the Donbass is in full swing, but there are also repeated airstrikes in the cities of western Ukraine. The port city of Mariupol has been practically razed to the ground; the remaining inhabitants are suffering a humanitarian disaster. In places such as Butscha, from which the Russians have withdrawn, there is evidence of atrocious war crimes. Reliable casualty figures are not yet available, but it is certain that thousands of soldiers and civilians have lost their lives. So far, almost five million people have fled abroad.

Transports, a clothing and materials warehouse and many charity events

Help for Ukraina in the Idstein area

In the Rheingau-Taunus district, many citizens, organisations and associations are involved in helping the refugees from Ukraine.

The initiative "Idstein hilft Ukraine" (Idstein helps Ukraine) of the Shumeyko family from Wörsdorf began collecting relief supplies just a few days after the Russian invasion and has since built up a well-functioning network for the war refugees in Idstein. Many others, such as Sonja Ebenhoch from Niederseelbach, Jule Schneider from Idstein, Maurice James and Marcel Mager, as well as the aid campaigner Igor Horbal from Heidenrod, also organise aid transports. Many have taken in refugees. The Refugee and Integration Aid (FHI) works together with the private initiatives, collects donations in kind and money, offers voluntary German lessons and supplies the refugees with clothes, shoes, household items, blankets, bedding and much more. Refugees can meet every Sunday in the garden of FHI.

Wichtige Adressen / Important addresses:

Stadt Idstein

Bürgerbüro (für die Anmeldung und Meldebescheinigung):
Tel. 06126-78-815, buergerbuero@idstein.de
Online-Terminvereinbarung /
Онлайн -запис на прийом;
<https://termine-reservieren.de/termine/stadt-idstein/?rs>

Integration und Teilhabe:

Elke Müller: Tel. 06126-78-313,
elke.mueller@idstein.de

Rheingau-Taunuskreis

**Infos auf Deutsch und Ukrainisch/
Інформація німецькою та українською мовами::**

<https://www.rheingau-taunus.de/migranten/ukraine.html>

Fachstelle „Ukraine“ Bad Schwalbach

Martha-von-Opel-Weg 31
65307 Bad Schwalbach

Fachstelle „Ukraine“ Rüdeshheim

Geisenheimer Str. 77/79
65385 Rüdeshheim

Fachstelle „Ukraine“ Idstein

Black & Decker-Str. 28
65510 Idstein

Für alle Fachstellen gilt / Застосовується до всіх відділів:

+++ будь ласка, узгодьте термін/
Terminvereinbarung erforderlich! +++

HOTLINE / гаряча лінія

Kontakt für Fragen zum Aufenthaltsrecht und zur Beantragung von Sozialleistungen /
Питання проживання та пільг:

Tel.: 06124 510-116 und -118

Erreichbarkeit: Mo-Do 08:00-11:30 Uhr, 13:00-15:00 Uhr und Fr 08:00-11:30 Uhr.

E-Mail: ukraine@rheingau-taunus.de

Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V.: (FHI)

Am Hexenturm 10, EG, Zi. 3

Tel.: 06126 78289

Bürozeiten /робочий час:

Mo. 15.00 – 17.00 Uhr, Do. 14.00 – 16.00 Uhr

fluechtlingshilfheidstein@gmx.de

Kleider- und Materiallager der Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe e.V. / FHI Склад одягу та побутових речей

Bahnhofsgebäude, letzte Tür links, 1. Stock
Öffnungszeiten: Freitags von 10-13 Uhr und nach Vereinbarung /відкрито П'ятниця з 10 до 13 год та за запитом(E-Mail FHI, s.o.)

Treffpunkt für ukrainische Flüchtlinge und Helfer /Місце зустрічі українських біженців:

Jeden Sonntag um 11 Uhr im Garten der Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe e.V. (FHI) am Ende der Gruner Straße (in der Kurve hinter dem Gassenbacher Hof) / Щонеділі об 11 в саду FHI

Photos:

The collection point of "Idstein hilft Ukraine" in Wörsdorf was filled in no time. The well-sorted relief supplies went to Ukraine by collective transport. ©

Photo: Axel Burisch

The yoga studio Movation was able to hand over a full donation box to "Idstein hilft Ukraine" after a Ukraine Day. © Photo: Gisela Schmitt

Good thing the shelves could be set up in time: this is how the shoe warehouse of the Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V. looked after a delivery! © Photo: sbo

Seven pupils from the Pestalozzi School and the Limes School actively supported the FHI team in April as part of an internship. Refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine also helped with the work in the warehouse.

Student interns at work in FHI's blanket and bedding warehouse: the boys also set up the shelves. © Photo: sbo

The girls were busy putting away the children's clothes - new donations arrived every day. ©Photo: Monika Wolff

Vladimir Putin is responsible for the war, not the Russian people

A comment from the editors

All over the world, people are protesting against Russia's attack on a sovereign state. Many brave Russian women and men are also taking to the streets and risking arrest and imprisonment for doing so. The Russian people and also our fellow Russian citizens are not to blame for this war. Even if many succumb to Putin's propaganda, most reject the war and many help Ukrainian refugees. Hopefully, the contact with Idstein's twin town Uglitsch has only been interrupted, not completely broken off - because then the many years of friendly dialogue would have been in vain. We also don't think it would be helpful to generally break off contact with all Russian artists and scientists and exclude them all from events; there are upright people among them who need our help. The exchange of culture and science is a peace project. This has been proven, for example, by the decades of collegial and friendly joint operation of the International Space Station. From there, astronauts from Europe, Russia, the USA, Canada or Japan show us over and over again very impressively that humanity has only this one planet with its thin vulnerable shell of life and that some things we argue about down here are not important at all when seen from above.

Imprint

steps



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for immigrants and all of us in Idsteiner Land and the surrounding area*

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Ethiopia: The civil war in Tigray

(sbo) Ethiopia is considered one of the "cradles of humanity" and the country where coffee comes from. It is a multi-ethnic state. Around 115 million people of almost 100 different ethnic groups live in nine independent regions. Apart from the official language Amharic, about 80 other languages are spoken there.

Ethiopia is a parliamentary republic. After 28 years of political domination by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the country has been ruled by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali since 2018, first in a party coalition, and since his re-election in 2021 with his Prosperity Party. He belongs to the Oromi population group. The new president introduced a series of reforms. In addition, a few months after his election, he concluded a peace treaty with the neighbouring country Eritrea, with which Ethiopia had been at enmity for decades. For this, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.

But a year later, disputes escalated with the TPLF regional government in Tigray, which held elections against the central government's permission and won with 98%. In November 2020, Abiy Ahmed Ali sent troops into the provincial capital Mekele and the bloody civil war began.

In June 2021, the TPLF retook the capital Mekele. Abiy Ahmed then called a "humanitarian" ceasefire. However, the TPLF continued to fight. The fighting also spread to Amhara and the Afar. The central government also mobilised again and bombed Mekele from the air. In November 2021, the central government declared a nationwide state of emergency. After military defeats, the TPLF withdrew again from Amhara and Afar.

On 15 February 2022, the Ethiopian parliament lifted the nationwide state of emergency.

Since the outbreak of the war, thousands of people have been killed and many have fled to other parts of the country or to Sudan. Parts of the infrastructure have been destroyed, and in northern Ethiopia around nine million people do not have enough food, according to United Nations estimates. Ethiopia is dependent on food aid from abroad. Food from the fertile regions arrives only with difficulty in the parts of the country affected by hunger.

Tigray is one of the drier areas and cannot feed its people on its own. Drought, floods and crop failures aggravate the situation.

The government in Addis Ababa has reversed some of the reforms and is also restricting freedoms again for fear of further autonomy attempts by other regional minorities.

An Ethiopian reports on the current situation in his home country.

Daniel comes from Gonder, a region north of Tigray. He sees the causes for the civil war in events that happened 20 years ago:

"The TPLF annexed Gonder in 1994 because they want to make Tigray an independent country and need regions like Gonder for that. Gonder, unlike Tigray, is fertile land that can feed the people. They have terrorised the people in Gonder and murdered around 1,600 people who opposed them. They also murdered my father, a priest. Tigray has also annexed areas north of Gonder. Instead of food, the West, especially the US, is supplying weapons to Tigray. UN vehicles have even been used by the TPLF to transport soldiers to the Amhara and Afar regions. The TPLF was already close to Addis Ababa, but has since been pushed back. However, they have taken hold in many parts of the Amhara region, e.g. Raya, Wollo and Tselemt. Already more than 300,000 Tigray have fled to Amhara. The farmers no longer have any livestock, as the farmers have taken them and slaughtered them. People only ever talk about what is happening in Tigray. Nobody talks about the situation in the areas occupied by the TPLF, i.e. Welkait, Tsegede, Tselemt and Raya. Many people are dying every day in the region. Many are fleeing and the world is watching. The TPLF has made it clear in its manifesto that it considers ethnic Amhara and the Orthodox Church as enemies. After coming to power, they deposed the deposed the patriarch and replaced him with one of their own. In the Oromia region, where President Abiy Ahmed comes from, Amhara and Orthodox Christians are also being killed on a daily basis - but no one reports on this because it could damage the image of the ruling party (Prosperity Gospel Party)."

Facts on Ethiopia:

number of inhabitants:	114.964 millio*
capital:	Addis Abeba
size:	1.104.300 kms ² (approx. the size of Bolivia)
languages:	Amharic (official language), Oromo and approx. 80 others
religions:	christians (approx. 55-60 %, - 50 % Ethiopian orthodox, 10 % protestants), muslims (approx. 33-40 %)
neighbouring countries:	Eritrea, Dschibuti, Somalia, Kenia, South Sudan, Sudan

*Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website.

Eritrea: A Dictatorship in the Horn of Afrika

(sbo & M.*)

Eritrea is a "presidential republic with a one-party system" - translated, this means it is a dictatorship, because there is only one state party. Other parties are banned.

President Isaias Afwerki has ruled the country since independence in 1993 and established the dictatorship.

The largest population group with about 50 - 55 % are the Tigrinya. They also live in Ethiopia, in the province of Tigray, but they are not a unified group. The second group, with about 30 %, is the Tigre. The rest is made up of minorities.

Many have fled abroad

It is estimated that between 500,000 and one million Eritreans live abroad, mostly orthodox Tigrinya. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), around 74,000 came to Germany. Many of them still feel threatened here and do not dare to express their opinions freely because they are spied on by compatriots who are loyal to the government and because relatives back home can get into trouble as a result.

Compulsory military service for all

Medical care and the school system in Eritrea are poor. According to UNICEF, a quarter of all school-age children do not attend school. Already in the last year of school, boys and girls have to do a kind of compulsory military service. This officially lasts 18 months, but often drags on for years. There are also reports of serious human rights violations such as torture or sexual slavery as part of this compulsory service. This forced service drives many young people to flee abroad.

Not safe even after flight

Unfortunately, refugees from Eritrea are rarely recognised as political refugees, but only on humanitarian grounds. This means that they must obtain a passport from the Eritrean consulate if they do not (or no longer) have one. This is very difficult, very expensive and involves harassment by the Eritrean authorities. They take advantage of the plight of their citizens to put pressure on them even abroad. Many refugees are also very afraid to enter the consulate or embassy of the regime they had to flee.

A refugee from Eritrea explains the situation in his home country

M.* fled Eritrea in 2015 to avoid being arrested again for political reasons. He had already been in prison twice for speaking his mind. He now lives in Germany. He prefers to remain anonymous because he still has family members in Eritrea and fears they will get into trouble if he speaks out publicly. "There are many reasons why many Eritreans, including me, have left our country," he says. "But the main reason for all my countrymen is political persecution. This is also known internationally."

He explains the situation in the country like this:

"First, Eritrea has been a dictatorship for 30 years. Secondly, there is no real religious freedom, only three religions are allowed: Muslim (Sunni), Christian Orthodox and Catholic - members of other minority churches are persecuted. Third, there is no constitution. Fourth, military service is endless, and fifth, there is neither an independent press nor freedom of expression.

Of course, I hear information from Eritrea from relatives or friends from time to time, but the situation is still the same. There is no improvement, and actually nobody expects anything to change as long as the dictator is in power."

On the civil war in neighbouring Ethiopia, he notes that it has of course only had a negative impact on the people of Eritrea, across all sectors. "Since the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the situation in Eritrea has not improved at all, and that is not only my opinion."

**Name known to the editors*

Facts on Eritrea:

number of inhabitants: approx. 3.546 million*

capital: Asmara

size: 117.600 kms² (approx. the size of Korea)

languages: predominantly Tigrinya und Arabisch (official languages) and also English, Tigre, Afar, Saho, Kunama, Bedscha, Blin and Nara as well as further national languages

religion: christians (orthodox, catholic, protestants), moslims (sunnites), both approx 50 %

neighbouring countries: Sudan, Ethiopia, Dschibuti

**source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website 2022. / Population figures vary from 3.6 to 6.7 and are not reliable. However, most statistics assume around 3.6 million.*

Interview with Ukrainian war refugees

Veronika and Larissa tell their story

Veronika is 19 years old, a trained educator and comes from Kiev. On 11 March, she and her mother Larissa fled the war with very little luggage and arrived in Idstein after an almost four-day odyssey by bus and train via Romania, Hungary and Austria. Her older brother was already abroad, working in America. Her sister also fled abroad, while other family members, their friends as well as their dog stayed behind in their home country. "The first few days we stayed with friends and had a lot of help from the voluntary organisations," she says. "Of course, the escape was very difficult, but now it's OK, now we are safe." In the meantime, they have found a small flat, and Veronika now even works in after-school care at an Idstein school. Her mother is a teacher at a Waldorf school in Kiev. Here she sits on the school bench again to learn German, and she also helps out in the clothing and material store of the Idstein refugee aid organisation and has joined a walking group of the TV Idstein. They keep in touch with friends and family back home with chats on their smartphones and via social media. About Germany, Veronika says, "It's a big, windy and beautiful country with nice people." Asked about their plans, they reply, "To return home as soon as possible." They are grateful for the support and sympathy they receive here and hope that one day they will be able to return the favour by visiting their new German friends in Kiev. Until then, they continue to learn German and are now Idsteiners for now.

Escape from Ethiopia - because she spoke her mind

The story of a young woman from Addis Abeba

By Traudel Hermann

K.* is 31 years old, comes from Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and is baptised Christian Orthodox. Her father runs a fruit wholesaler, her mother had owned a hairdresser's shop and a boutique. K. attended a public school and, besides her mother tongue Amharic, speaks fluent English and in the meantime also passable German. K. has been in Germany for 11 years. I ask K. what the reason was for leaving her home country. The young woman takes a deep breath and says: "That is a long and complicated story! In 2005 there were parliamentary elections in Ethiopia. During that time, Meles Zensawi became Prime Minister. He has since died. After his election, there was unrest throughout the country at that time. Different political camps fought each other and my mother was shot dead in a market. She had nothing to do with the clashes. She was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. She only lived to be 36." K. pauses and can no longer suppress her tears. "I was 14 years old at the time. I still have three younger siblings, two brothers and a sister. From that time on, I ran the household! I was full of hatred towards the police at that time because one of them had killed my mother! I think I would have been capable of anything at that time to avenge the death of my beloved mother!" This was a tragic coincidence at the time. But it was not to remain with this one!

Six years later:

In 2010, a family friend brought flyers to her house made by political resistance fighters. He asked K., who was 20 years old by then, if she could distribute some. K. was not aware of the danger she was putting herself in. After it became known that there were these flyers in K.'s parents' house, the police came and arrested K.. She did not even have the flyers in her hands at that time. She was in prison for half a day. The young woman became aggressive after her arrest and was full of anger because these men had killed her mother. It was only through the contacts her father had with the police that K. was released. However, he had to promise to take his daughter out of the country. The family put K. under pressure. She had to leave the country as soon as possible. Either the young woman would have gone to prison for many years or she would have been killed. The government was unpredictable at that time. "It took five weeks before my father was able to organise a flight to Munich with the help of a smuggler. The trafficker, half Saudi and half Eritrean, had all my papers, and my passport. Unfortunately, he didn't give me my papers back later. He helped me to leave the country. For this, my father paid 4500 €. First half of it, and after I reached Munich, the rest. But I really wanted to go to Frankfurt am Main because a friend of our family lived there. She was already informed about everything. My friend told me to go to the police because I had to register there. The police in turn told me that I first had to go to Gießen to the preliminary reception center. Then I went to Gießen. There I was interviewed. I told my story and I was immediately recognised as a political refugee. I spent a month in the preliminary reception center. Then I went to the asylum-seekers' home in Hofheim. I was alone and was with many noisy people. It was terrible for me. A helper found me a room where I could get some peace and quiet. After three and a half months I got all the necessary papers, including official recognition as a political refugee. Then I found a job in the Lufthansa first-class lounge at Frankfurt Airport and a flat in

Rüsselsheim. During this time, my life became the first time that I could lean back a little! From Rüsselsheim I moved first to Taunusstein and then to Idstein."

It was during this time that K. met her partner at the time. He comes from Eritrea. They have two children together, a six-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter, but have since separated. The boy attends a pre-school and the girl attends kindergarten.

Today

K. is now getting along well in Idstein and says that people are always very friendly to her. "The long period of the pandemic was not easy for my children and me. We hardly knew anyone and lived for ourselves. We didn't talk to anyone. No one asked about us. Only once a week did the Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V. have a women's regulars' table over the internet. I always enjoyed this hour very much! In the meantime I have been vaccinated and feel a little safer," K. adds.

We wish her and her children all the best!

**name known to the editors*

Photo: View of the mountains from a street in Addis Ababa. © Photo private.

Afghanistan: first home country, Germany already second

An Interview with Wais Maarij

by Roswitha Kacmaczyk and Hans-Peter Buscher

Why and since when have you been in Germany?

I come from Afghanistan and fled with my wife because of the persecution there without any belongings. I don't like to talk about that. I want to have fond memories of the beautiful Afghanistan where I grew up and not have to keep thinking about the cruelty there and on the flight. My father was a doctor, head of a clinic, but he couldn't continue working there because the working conditions under the Taliban became bad and he was persecuted. He did not survive. I learned English and worked as an interpreter, then I studied economics and finally set up a radio station with 5 locations. I had to leave all that behind.

We reached Germany in 2013. And here I started a new life with my wife. Our two daughters were born here. Now we hope that we will soon get German citizenship, just like our daughters. I have a job at a bank and my wife works in the IT sector. We are happy to be able to stand on our own two feet so far.

What was the biggest challenge for you?

Of course we have a different culture, but adjusting wasn't really that difficult. The most difficult thing at first was the German language.

What was particularly difficult to get used to here?

It was interesting that people tend to greet each other with distance. In Afghanistan, we go straight to each other and hug; that's a bit exaggerated. And then we say "hello" or "Salam aleikum" to each other more often; that means "I wish you good health". In the beginning, I worked here in a home for the elderly. There, when I said "hello" to an old lady every time I came to her room, she told me, "To say hello once is enough."

Is there another difference you can think of right now?

When we eat, we always eat together. At home, a meal always started with grace and ended with thanksgiving. We have that here too. But when I was out, I never ate while walking or in public. My father said that maybe the poor who couldn't get something to eat would then have to watch; the smell of the food can disturb the others. So it happens that even here in Germany I can't eat anything outside our home. Many people eat something on the bus or otherwise in public, I still can't; my stomach wouldn't go along with it.

What about punctuality?

I am very punctual myself. But in Afghanistan, it doesn't really matter if you arrive at the appointed time or 2 hours later. Maybe I wouldn't take an appointment so seriously there either. That's not expected there either.

And what about reliability?

There are many Afghans who are very reliable people. They are very cordial and especially reliable and helpful, even under stress and in times of heavy workload. In times of trouble, we are there for each other. That is a big plus in my country. When someone agrees to do something, they do it.

Have you experienced anything funny in Germany?

First of all, with all due respect, I can't allow myself to judge something as funny [note: probably in the sense of "making fun of something"]; but some behaviour is a culture shock for me. For example, blowing your nose loudly and strongly and blowing your nose in public and even in restaurants. In Afghanistan, this is considered very unpleasant and rude.

Which dish is typical for your country and which one do you particularly like?

There are many delicious dishes in my country, but the most famous ones are Qabilie Palauw, Manto and Kabab. Since I have been in Germany (my second home), I have missed Kabab very much.

Thank you very much for the interview and continued success in your second home!

The „Tafel“: Volunteering with enthusiasm

By Roswitha Kacmaczyk, Melanie Weber and Hans-Peter Buscher

What is the Tafel?

In 1993, the "Tafel" (food bank) was founded in Berlin. Today there are more than 950 food banks in Germany, which, under the motto "distribute instead of destroy", collect food that is still in perfect condition but no longer sellable from supermarkets, and pass it on to people with low incomes. The clients of the food banks often receive state benefits such as basic security, social welfare, unemployment benefits or benefits according to the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act. Low-income earners, pensioners, single parents and families whose income does not exceed a certain amount can also receive an ID card for the Tafel.

In our district there is the Idsteiner Tafel, for people from Idstein, Hünstetten, Niedernhausen and Waldems, and the Bad Schwalbach Taunussteiner Tafel, both of which have been active for over 15 years. The two Tafeln see themselves as the Tafeln in the Lower Taunus and are run by the Diakonisches Werk Rheingau-Taunus.

At the Tafel, customers receive mainly fruit and vegetables, dairy products and baked goods, but also goods with damage to the packaging or from overproduction for a small contribution to costs.

The food is collected from the markets by the transport service, checked at the distribution points in Idstein, Taunusstein or Bad Schwalbach, sorted and distributed to the customers.

Each distribution day, two per week per distribution point, between 130 and 230 people come to pick up food, depending on the location. Good organisation and many volunteers ensure that everything runs smoothly.

New helping hands are always very welcome!

Visiting Tafel in Taunusstein-Bleidenstadt

A delivery truck is just expected to bring collected food. They are unpacked, examined and sorted into the various boxes. During the short waiting time, a few conversations arise, and we thank them for their friendly openness.

Mr F. reports:

"I already heard about the Tafel when I was working. After my retirement I wanted to help there. As a cook, I know a lot about food. What keeps me there? The team is simply nice. Then I always have contact with the people who come, I like that. We talk to them. Sometimes we get to know their life story. But we don't say anything about it. They are grateful if they can get something off their chest. We also give them courage and hope and encouragement. I myself always like to recommend what you can cook with the food and how to live healthily. So it's not just distribution, but also some life support. We never ask why they have become needy. We have too much respect there. There is a limit there."

Mr L adds:

"I totally agree with that. The team is great; I wouldn't want to miss that. How did I get into it? I was a counter clerk at the post office. For reasons of reorganisation of the office, I was to be transferred. After 40 years of service, I had the alternative of working 1000 hours in a non-profit association and then being able to retire. [Note: Model of "committed retirement" of the Deutsche Bundespost and Deutsche Telekom.] The 1000 hours are long gone, but I wanted to continue. It simply brought great satisfaction to work in such a team and to have "customer contact". How can you convince others to take on such an honorary position? Actually, everyone has no time. But if you have time and want to do something good: just come! We have already had school interns and one-year interns from the university here. Refugees can also join us. Some have already been here, but unfortunately mostly only for a short time."

Ms. R. tells us:

"I used to be a curative education nurse and felt that my job was a task. Now I am retired and have been here in Taunusstein for a year. So I thought about what I could do. I wanted to take part in an honorary office. I have been involved ever since. I have a second voluntary activity: I drive disabled people to appointments that they would otherwise find difficult to reach. I know disabled people, I can deal with them well and I can understand them. And they are grateful. That gives me a lot of satisfaction."

Get involved in voluntary work!

Our society thrives on volunteerism.

There are many opportunities in the social, church or community sector.

Another important job for volunteers: The Integration Scouts

Shehide Selmani is not only the chairperson of the Foreigners' Advisory Council in Idstein, but is also part of the team of Idstein integration scouts. Here she tells us about their tasks.

"15 years ago I didn't even know what integration pilot meant - although I've actually been one myself all along (at least privately)! The feeling of helping people is priceless. To become an integration scout, you need training, in which you learn a lot of new things.

Our job is to give advice, help with filling out various applications and forms; we explain where to find what and are wholeheartedly involved - that's very important. It is citizens with different problems and worries who come to us.

We are in the neighbourhood office in Limburger Straße 63a in Idstein on Mondays from 14.00 to 17.00 and on Thursdays from 08.00 to 11.00 h, and you don't need an appointment with us. Our guides speak Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Macedonian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian (and of course German!)."

The team of integration pilots in Idstein:

(from left to right) Angelika Birkenstock, Vjollca Sahiti, Soud Touaché, Ahmad Aldahik, Laura Bunjaku, Gülcan Terzi, Shehide Selmani.

Accompaniment at the end of life The Hospice Movement in Idstein fulfills an important social task

By Heinke Geiter

The Hospice Movement in the Idsteiner Land e. V. has been visiting seriously ill and dying people since 2001 to support them and their families during this difficult time, to talk to each other, to go for a walk or to sit quietly by the bedside, to answer questions and to take away people's fear of dying.

This support is open to all people, no matter where they come from or what their religion is. The hospice movement is led by a seven-member board and is active in Idstein, Hünstetten, Waldems and Niedernhausen.

What are the specific tasks of the hospice movement?

Together with the doctors from the centre for outpatient palliative care in Wiesbaden, it ensures that the patients are not in pain, do not suffer from shortness of breath, nausea, anxiety or other complaints.

We provide hospice and / or palliative* care to about 190 people per year in their homes, in the six nursing homes, in a facility for people with disabilities and in the Idstein hospital.

In addition, she takes care of the concerns and questions of relatives, accompanies people in their grief in individual conversations, a closed grief group, a Sunday café for mourners, during grief walks in small groups or during grief walks with individual mourners.

We also help with making living wills, give lectures, provide information about the work of the hospice and palliative service and publish a magazine.

How many staff and hospice volunteers are there?

The hospice association currently has about 380 members, over 50 volunteer hospice companions, seven full-time employees who work as both coordinators and palliative care specialists, and employee in administration.

Is there already a need for immigrant hospice workers for mother-tongue accompaniment of migrants?

So far we have only accompanied German-speaking people. We would like to accompany people from other countries as well, and train hospice companions with a migrant background for this purpose.

How can interested people become volunteers and what does the training of hospice companions look like?

We train interested men and women to become hospice companions on twelve Saturdays and in a 20-hour internship. They learn a lot about dealing with dying people and their relatives and practise accompanying people lovingly and mindfully in role plays and conversations.

How is the hospice work financed?

Our work is voluntary and free of charge for the people we accompany. That is why we depend on people who support us through their donation or membership.

What do we wish for the future?

We want to build a hospice for people who cannot be cared for at home. We have set up a foundation for this purpose. We hope for benefactors and donors, because only if many people help can this dream become reality.

Would you like to know more?

We look forward to your enquiries:

Hospizbewegung im Idsteiner Land e.V.
Fürstin-Henriette-Dorothea Weg 1
65510 Idstein
Tel.: 06126 - 700 2713
Fax: 06126 - 700 2710
E-mail: info@hospizbewegung-idstein.de
Internet: www.hospizbewegung-idstein.de

"Unfortunately, we do not yet have any hospice companions with a migration background. We would like to train them so that they can then also accompany people in their mother tongue."

Heinke Geiter, Chairwoman of the Hospice Movement in Idsteiner Land e.V.

What is...

In this column we want to regularly introduce and explain important people from Germany's past and present, historical dates, holidays, customs and traditions. In this way, we would like to make our new immigrant fellow citizens understand the history and present of our country, which may one day also become their home. This issue is about special holidays in spring.

...Father's Day and Mother's Day?

by Hans-Peter Röther

Father's Day takes place on Ascension Day, a Christian holiday celebrated every year on the fortieth day after Easter. On this day, Christians commemorate the ascension of Jesus to heaven. For centuries, outdoor services have been held on this day, as well as walks, often carrying "handcarts" decorated with branches and flowers for drinks and food. The merry get-together on this day was soon called "Father's Day". More and more, women also joined in, so that the day increasingly became a family day for many people. Nevertheless, men in Germany like to use this day to celebrate without their families and also to drink a few glasses of beer together. However, "Father's Day" is not tied to the Christian Ascension Day everywhere in the world. In other countries it takes place in March or June and even in December.

In addition to Father's Day, Mother's Day is celebrated in Germany on the second Sunday in May and on various days around the world, to thank and honour mothers. This day was first developed and celebrated in the USA around 1907 / 1912 until it spread throughout the world. Children are encouraged to make gifts for their mothers in kindergarten and school, and chocolate manufacturers do good business with heart-shaped packaging. In Germany, for example, we celebrate our wives, husbands and children on two days a year as a good tradition. For many consciously, for many unconsciously as thanks to God and nature. We also want to invite our foreign fellow citizens to join us. Everyone should experience this beautiful tradition.

Is there a similar day in your home countries? The editors would be pleased to receive information from our readers!

A spring herb

Which plant is this??

(hpb) It is always found by the wayside on walks through sparse woods. When it is found in the garden, it is carelessly removed as a weed. Yet it is a beautiful plant. What perhaps makes it special is that in the Middle Ages it was particularly important to poorer people as a seasoning and medicinal plant. Those who know this will treat it with respect.

The solution:

It is the garlic rue (*Alliaria petiolata*). It is still interesting and important today as a food plant for various butterflies, bees and beetles. If you rub its leaves, it actually smells of garlic. The young leaves and can be used to flavour salads, for example. If you want to find out more, look it up on the internet!

Readers' Mail

Dear editorial team,

I am thrilled with your 2nd issue: many interesting stories and reports, but also information and explanations! The small paragraph "In brief", which explains in short sentences what the article is about, the instructive riddles - and your idea to translate the articles summarised on the last pages at least in two other languages - everything is very successful. It seems important to me that short sentences and few foreign words are used - so that many people who speak little German become curious (and stay curious!): It is mainly for them that you make the newspaper. I only look over the fence...

Brigitte Frost

Dear Team,

steps is a great project, especially when you consider that this newspaper is made by a team of non-professionals. The design is very appealing and the content concept offers interesting stories for every reader. I hope that the useful information will also be read by many migrants. I think there should also be a complete Arabic edition for the website. Maybe you can find translators for this?

I also suggest that you advertise your project a bit more and refer to the online versions.

I wish you continued success with your work!

Hussam Sara

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steps health

Long COVID and PIMS: What is that?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It caused a pandemic in 2019. Many virus mutants were very dangerous. There were so many deaths that society had to protect itself through emergency measures. This has also meant giving up freedoms. Now a less dangerous variant prevails, Omikron, and we can live more freely again. But let's not forget that there is Long COVID and PIMS! And that another wave is looming this autumn. *(hpb)*

What is Long COVID?

A considerable proportion of those infected suffer from the symptoms for a very long time. How long the symptoms last varies. For many, fatigue and lack of concentration and some physical complaints have remained permanent until now.

Many people have become depressed as a result. There is no effective medication for Long COVID yet.

One has to wait and try to keep fit mentally and physically at least several times a day for a short time.

Long COVID is likely to occur if the symptoms persist for more than 3-4 weeks after an infection.

What is PIMS?

PIMS means "Pediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome". It is an inflammatory disease affecting children that involves many organs and systems of the body. PIMS can be triggered by SARS-CoV-2. It is an abnormal reaction of the immune system to the virus (autoimmune disease). It occurs a few weeks apart from COVID. It can also affect those children in whom COVID itself was not noticed.

The clinical picture is similar to acute rheumatic fever: the main symptom is fever. The heart and blood vessels are often involved. Development into toxic shock and serious joint and heart disease is possible.

If the disease is recognised in time, a fatal course can be prevented. Immunoglobulins and cortisone preparations are primarily effective.

PIMS is not very common in the omicron wave. It occurred more frequently with the earlier variants and is now almost forgotten. But these more dangerous variants are not yet defeated! They can all come back in the autumn. Think about vaccination.

Should children be vaccinated against COVID?

Difficult question?

It is true that it is not yet known whether diseases will occur many years from now that must be counted as a result of vaccinating children. However, researchers consider this unlikely. So far, at least, the rate of side effects, especially severe complications, is extremely low. Moreover, if any do occur, such as heart muscle inflammation, they usually disappear.

In times of pandemics, even asymptomatic children act as foci of infection. Parents and grandparents can become seriously ill through them. However, this argument weakens when the pandemic subsides.

The disease is more harmless in children than in adults, but not without danger. The very rare PIMS and a Long COVID are also possible in children and cause much suffering. Researchers therefore recommend vaccinating children from the age of 5.

**Our society needs a lot of fully vaccinated people.
This can prevent another pandemic.
Get vaccinated a third time!**

steps says Thank you!

Our newspaper project is also made possible by donations.

We would like to thank the Naspa Idstein and the Wiesbadener Volksbank eG for their generous donations.

We would also like to thank all those who have contributed with their active support to the fact that we have been able to offer our readers 24 pages with a colourful mixture of interesting information for the third time now, first and foremost the vrm team for their professional advice.

The steps editorial team

On behalf of Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V.

Oh my, he's got a bird!! (meaning: he has a bat in his belfry)

German figures of speech and what they mean

By Hans-Peter Röther and Steffi Bobrowski

Note of the translators:

Now the following information is a difficult one to translate, since it tackles German language issues for advanced learners.

However, We tried our best to make the following article understandable also to those of you who speak little or no German, since it is interesting anyway!

It is about figures of speech, and what they mean, and an Ethiopian and a Syrian give us some examples in their language.

Idioms bring colour into language. They often abbreviate statements humorously or sharply. They often refer to historical references or habits no longer practised today, or even to foreign languages.

There are idioms that are immediately and easily understood and whose origin is immediately clear. Other idioms are not immediately explicable, e.g. „etwas abklappern“ (to rattle something off). This comes from hunting. During a drive hunt, the game was startled with the rattling of wood. Or with a lot of noise, i.e. with groans and caws, i.e. with effort.

With which idiom can one say:

- ▶ say that one asks a question about the essential?
(to ask the Gretchen question)
- ▶ say that someone is a little crazy?
(have a bird)
- ▶ say that someone has done something forbidden?
(have something up their sleeve)
- ▶ say that one wants to donate something?
(to spring something)
- ▶ say that someone has a secure position?
(sit firmly in the saddle)
- ▶ say that one has caught someone?
(that you have caught someone)
- ▶ say that one has made a mistake?
(to shoot a buck)
- say that one is shirking a task or a decision?
▶ (to bury one's head in the sand).

In the next issue, we will reveal how these idioms came to be, and what they are like in Syria, for example.

Somaya from Syria and Kidu from Ethiopia have been in Germany for a few years, are already very familiar with German idioms and have studied them a little. We asked them what some German idioms are like in their language - or more precisely, which metaphors are used in Arabic and Amharic.

For the above idioms, there are no similar equivalents in either language. But the following idioms are used similarly in Ethiopia or Syria:

In Ethiopia, for example, people also say, like in German „Ich habe die Nase voll“ (literally: „my nose is full“) when they are fed up with something. In Syria they say: "This is at the tip of my nose". In German, however, today we also often say "Ich habe die Schnauze voll" („my mouth is full) or "das wird mir zu bunt" („this is getting too colourful for me) - and this is also said in Amharic. When we say "That's not my beer" in German, we say "That's not my weather" in Arabic - or „this is not my cup of tee in“ in English.

"I have a clear path" („freie Bahn haben“), says someone who knows no obstacles - in Syria they say "the path is open". When we are "totally up in the air" („total durch den Wind“) here, in Arabic we go "through the wall". (In German, the phrase comes from sailor-speak).

In Arabic, "leading someone by the nose" is called "pulling someone to blindness".

Some people like to rub salt in other people's wounds („Salz in die Wunde reiben“) - that's what they also say in Syria.

And when we think something is okay, we say, „Alles ist in Butter!“ ("everything is in butter") That's what they say in Addis Ababa too! We will reveal where this expression comes from in the next issue. And then we will also look at proverbs.

German is a difficult language, and sometimes even people with German as their native language have problems with grammar. A teacher explains **some stumbling blocks of the German grammar**: The 3 articles and the problems of saying no or not, and there also some funny words starting with un-...
Since these articles cannot be reasonably translated, we refer all those of you who are on advanced levels in German to the German version of steps!

Frauen kommen weiter(Women move on): The new free courses are starting!

New courses for migrant women in Rheingau-Taunus-Kreis

By Ildikó Szelecz and Kerstin Reimers

At the beginning of May, new courses will start again within the framework of the projects Frauen kommen weiter („Women move on“) and PC courses of the CITOYEN Foundation (it was reported in detail in the first issue of Steps). Women with a migration history are cordially invited to enrol. This year we can even offer the courses at four different locations in the Rheingau-Taunus district: Idstein, Bad Schwalbach, Geisenheim and Waldems. The courses are free of charge, they take place once a week in our new course rooms in Maximilianstraße in Idstein and last about 3 months. You can learn a lot and it is fun! Interested? Then register, the number of participants is limited. Information about the courses, such as dates and times, can be obtained from the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses given.

Registration via: Dr. Ildikó Szelecz:

E-Mail: fkw@stiftung-citoyen.de

phone: 0176 504 12251

Registration via: Kerstin Reimers:

E-Mail: projekte@stiftung-citoyen.de

phone: 069 69 86 93 60

The course programme starting in May:

Digital competences

How can I use digital media to learn German better? Where can I find cool videos to practise German? How do I find German learning portals that suit me? If you want to know this so that you can learn German on your own, you've come to the right place!

Don't worry, even those who don't know anything about computers can join this course!

Registration via Dr. Ildikó Szelecz

Strengthening your personality - Empowerment

Become more courageous, dare more, feel more secure and learn to trust in yourself and your own abilities. In this course all this can be practised. With lots of practical exercises, learn to pursue your own goals and have fun at the same time. Dare!

Registration via Dr. Ildikó Szelecz

Keyboarding typing and PC basics

Computer skills from the very beginning: The basic computer course invites you to acquire basic computer skills. Using the laptops available during the course, we want to take the first steps together - this includes getting to know the keyboard, the first steps in using the programmes Word and Excel. Learning to write a letter or create a spreadsheet. The question of how to use the internet will also be explored.

Even those who have no idea about computers can take part in this course!

Registration via Kerstin Reimers

We also offer two one-off workshops (each on one afternoon):

Workshop Numbers

Compare prices, save and handle money well. Percentages, interest, discounts, costs etc. - everything about numbers and how to calculate them. If you want to learn how to do this, this is the place to be!

Workshop Healthy Eating

How can I feed my family and myself healthily, what is important? In theory and practice (shopping together) there is a lot to learn about healthy food.

Registration for both via Dr. Ildikó Szelecz

Reading tips for kids

The day grandma broke the internet

*"Tiffany was supposed to look after grandma ONE TIME.
And TODAY, of all days, grandma had to KILL the internet.
THE WHOLE INTERNET. All over the world. Great..."*

(sbo) Grandma and Grandpa are looking after Tiffany, Max and Luisa during the holidays because their parents are at work. Maybe it would have been better if the children had looked after grandma, because she sat at the computer, click-clicked a few times - and accidentally broke the internet.

Disaster! Max can no longer play the space video game with his friends or send text messages, Luisa can no longer listen to her favourite band, and grandpa can't finish watching his programme about fishing.

After a while, the parents come home because they can't do their work without the internet, and they now have to figure out what to do with their time without it.

We won't tell you any more, except that grandpa's analogue portable radio plays a role and a pizza boy suddenly appears because the navigation system no longer works and he doesn't know where to unload the pizzas.

In any case, this story by Marc-Uwe Kling is wonderfully written and beautifully illustrated by Astrid Henn.

A funny story for a cosy hour without the internet.

Marc-Uwe Kling: Der Tag, an dem die Oma das Internet kaputt gemacht hat.

6 - 10 years, 12 €, Carlsen Verlag 2018

What do you do if the internet is really broken?

(sbo) You don't need a granny who clicks the wrong way to do that. It can also be an excavator that breaks a pipe while shovelling. Or if the sun spits too much plasma into our flight path and the "space weather" paralyses the satellites and our sensitive electronics.

Do you have a plan B for what to do then? School might still work, but what will you do in your free time?

Here are a few tips. By the way, you can try them out even if the internet is still working. Just leave out your smartphone, tablet or internet TV and do something yourself!

For example, you could

▶ play football together outside

▶ play card or board games in bad weather (I'm sure your parents still have some in the cupboard!)

Make your own TV programme (make up a story together and show it to your parents in the evening)

▶ make something great - either a work of art with cardboard, paper, paints, scissors and glue or build a hut outside out of earth, sand, sticks, stones and leaves.

▶ ...or read a book together: one reads aloud, the others listen. For example, the book about the grandma who broke the internet.

Of course, you can also help your parents with cooking, cleaning or other household chores. I'm sure they'll be happy! And together it's even a lot of fun!

Do you have any more ideas? Write to us! redaktion@steps-fhi-ev.de

What kids say

Nitsi is 12 and comes from Khmelnytsky in Ukraine. She arrived in Germany on 24 March with her parents Alyona and Sergyi. The grandparents and their friends stayed behind.

They came by car; according to Nitsi, the journey was a bit bumpy and took three days. They found shelter with friends who live in Gau-Bischofsheim. She is taking classes online at a Ukrainian school.

Nitsi, what were your first impressions of Germany?

A lot of fountains. I think it's very beautiful. I like it here.

Do you already have friends here?

Yes, I've already made some.

Is it difficult for you to learn German?

Yes, a little bit.

Is there anything you find unusual or funny in Germany?

Very friendly people. Especially strangers to each other - you go for a walk and everyone smiles at you.

What do you wish for most?

That my grandmother comes to live with us and that there is peace in Ukraine again.

Infos, News, Events and more...

A cooking event: Persian cuisine

Cooking and eating together in Wingsbach

Roswitha Kacmaczyk, who is not only active in the Taunusstein Tafel and refugee aid, sent us this special event tip: The community foundation in Taunusstein invites people interested in cooking who would like to enrich their menu with dishes from foreign countries to a Persian cooking meeting.

Under the guidance of chef Maryam Hashemy, participants will embark on a journey into Iranian cuisine and learn how to use typical oriental spices, saffron and nuts to conjure up delicacies typical of the country, which will then be enjoyed together. The afternoon is organised by project leader Roswitha Kacmaczyk with the support of Claudia Gierth and Kathrin Ammenhäuser.

- ▶ The meeting point is on Saturday, 14 May 2022 at 2 pm in the sports and culture hall in Wingsbach.
- ▶ The meal is planned for approx. 6 pm, so that the evening will end at approx. 9 pm. There will be a cost contribution of 40.00 euros for the rent, food, non-alcoholic drinks and a small champagne reception.
- ▶ Please bring an apron and a good kitchen knife.
- ▶ The number of participants is limited to ten, so register quickly! You can do this by emailing the community foundation: gdiehl@buergerstiftung-taunusstein.de or by transferring 40.00 euros to the account of the community foundation: IBAN: DE 45 510 900 00 000 1234501 by 06.05.2022 at the latest. Please state your name and the keyword Koch Event 14.05.2022 in the reason for payment.
- ▶ For participation is subject to the 3G rules.

Gas and oil are scarce and expensive

What we can do to save energy

Heating:

- ▶ 20 degrees in the flat is enough - it is better to dress warmer than to turn up the heating.
- ▶ Do not leave windows tilted for a long time when ventilating, but open them fully for a short time ("shock ventilation"). This saves heating energy and prevents mould.

Electricity:

- ▶ Leave the light on only in the rooms where you are.
- ▶ Clean the ice compartment in the refrigerator regularly, otherwise the appliance will consume too much electricity.
- ▶ Switch off electrical appliances such as televisions, computers or stereo systems completely when not in use. The standby function also consumes electricity!
- ▶ If you are not at home for a longer period of time, you can also switch off the WLAN router.

Car:

- ▶ There is (unfortunately) still no speed limit in Germany, but you can still slow down - it's worth it: if you only drive 100 km/h instead of 160 km/h, for example, you can save up to a third of the fuel!
- ▶ Shift up in good time (at approx. 2000 rpm) and keep the engine speed low.
- ▶ Avoid short distances - journeys in the city can often be made on foot.
- ▶ Air conditioners in cars consume a lot of fuel - so maybe switch them off in between.
- ▶ The car also consumes a lot of fuel when it is idling. Switch off the engine at level crossings or traffic lights with a long red phase.

Used PC and laptops wanted!

Most of us can hardly imagine life without electronic devices. For refugees, however, they are particularly important because without them, contact with family members and friends at home would not be possible. A smartphone is still sufficient for making phone calls or "WhatsApp", but they also need a laptop, PC or at least a tablet for communicating with authorities, studying for school or training.

Functioning used hardware is also urgently needed for the participants in the project "Women get ahead".

The Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V. collects all kinds of used devices and sets them up again. We collect everything, including accessories such as keyboards, monitors and mice! So if you are buying a new device, don't give your old one to the dealer to be scrapped or take it to the recycling centre, but rather to us - that way they will still find a useful reuse!

Offers to: fluechtlingshilfeidstein@gmx.de

Back to school?

School-leaving qualifications for people with a history of flight and migration

If you are between 18 and 35 years old and would like to complete your secondary school leaving certificate, secondary modern school leaving certificate or (vocational) school leaving certificate (*Haupt-, oder Realschulabschluss, Fachabitur*), you can apply for a scholarship at the Crespo Foundation.

More information at: www.crespo-foundation.de/SABA

Women who need help with their scholarship application are welcome to contact Ildikó Szelecz. Contact: 0176 50412251 or at fkw@stiftung-citoyen.de

Drivers and helpers needed!

The Refugee and Integration Aid Association (Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V.) is looking for drivers for transports with our trailer, which we use for removals and furniture transports for refugees. We also need helpers with manual skills, including professionals, e.g. for electrical or plumbing work.

Please contact fluechtlingshilfeldstein@gmx.de

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steps explains

Germany, the Paper country...

Part 2: Contracts

(sbo) In the course of our lives, we conclude a whole series of contracts: the rental contract, the contract with the electricity provider, the employment contract, the purchase contract for the car, the mobile phone contract for the mobile phone, the childcare contract with the kindergarten or the contract for liability insurance.

What is a contract?

"A contract is a mutual commitment between two or more people" (Wikipedia). This means: one partner undertakes to deliver a good or service and the other undertakes to pay for it on time.

A valid contract can be concluded between the contracting partners in writing by the signature of the partners. This is the rule. The most secure contracts are those made before a notary. Today, many contracts are also made online. The conditions (e.g. the period of notice) are binding for both partners.

Children up to 7 years of age are not legally competent. This means that no contracts can be made with them. Children and young people from 7 to 18 can only conclude contracts with the consent of their parents.

Dubious contracts

Imagine the doorbell rings and two friendly gentlemen explain to you that you are paying far too much for your electricity and that they can offer you a much cheaper tariff. They ask to see your last electricity bill, type away on their tablet and then show you that in future you will only have to pay 70 euros a month instead of 80. You think the gentlemen are from your electricity supplier and you think it's nice that they want to help you save money. You sign the form they have filled out on your tablet.

A week later you get a rude awakening: You receive a letter from your electricity supplier confirming the cancellation of your previous contract. A second letter arrives from another electricity company: They confirm that you have signed a two-year contract with them. In the first year, it costs only 70 euros a month because of the new customer bonus, but 90 euros the next year. And the basic fee is also higher than with the old provider.

I'm sure many of us have experienced something similar, not only at the door, but also in shops or on the internet. Especially migrants who do not yet understand enough German are often victims of dubious offers.

What do we have to look out for when signing a contract?

Rule number 1 - very important: Don't sign anything at the front door or on the street!

► Don't let strangers into your home unannounced. If in doubt, ask for identification. Your electricity provider, for example, would announce a necessary visit in advance in writing, explain the reason for the visit and also give a specific date.

► It is also better not to sign any contracts on the phone.

Rule number 2: Do not sign contracts that you do not understand. Read the small print!

► Have all the terms and conditions of the contract explained to you or translated.

► If you want to sign a contract on the internet, check whether the website has an imprint.

► Is the company in Germany? Caution: Complaints will be difficult with foreign companies.

► Is there a complete home address?

► Are there notes on data protection and general terms and conditions (GTC - see glossary)?

► Is there a way to contact the company?

Rule number 3: Compare the offers and see what others say about the providers.

- ▶ Ask friends and acquaintances which providers they have had good experiences with.
- ▶ There are comparison platforms for goods and services, e.g. for electricity and internet. It's best to look at different websites to get a better overview. However, it is best to make contracts with the provider itself, not on the comparison platforms. These are not entirely neutral, as they receive commissions for contracts concluded.
- ▶ The lowest price does not mean that the product or service is really cheaper. You should check these questions:
 - ▶ How long does a contract run (the term)?
 - ▶ What is the cancellation period of the contract?
 - ▶ Does the low price apply for the whole term or only for the first few months?
 - ▶ Which services are included, which services cost something? Some companies have neither a hotline nor customer service or make you pay a lot for it.

Rule number 4: Be careful with your data, especially when paying online.

- ▶ Only give information that is absolutely necessary. Check the data protection regulations.

You can also get help with problems from the
Consumer advice: www.verbraucherzentrale-hessen.de
There is also a lot of information in different languages.

Steps explains

A **contract** is concluded (made), revoked (cancelled) or terminated (ended).

The "**small print**": These are the details about the product/scope of delivery, prices, term and cancellation periods as well as the so-called **AGB** - General Terms and Conditions (GTC).

The **cancellation period**: e.g. 3 months before the end of the contract. If you miss this deadline, the contract is extended by another term, which is specified in the "small print".

The **(minimum) term**: You cannot cancel the contract during this period.

The **scope of delivery and the delivery date**: This is everything the product contains (i.e. the goods with all components or all services) and when it will be delivered (e.g. the day the internet provider activates your access).

The **withdrawal period**: This is the time after the conclusion of the contract during which you can cancel the contract and withdraw from your obligation to pay. This period is specified in the "small print"; as a rule, it is at least 14 days.

Important: Contracts concluded before a notary cannot be revoked.

steps report

More and more rubbish in our streets: How do we stop the rubbish pigs?

In Idstein there are litter bins and containers for used glass everywhere, there are even stations for the disposal of dog excrement in the parks, and every apartment building has bins for four different types of waste.

Nevertheless, empty bottles and beer cans, cigarette packs and butts, bags of leftovers from the fast food restaurant and other packaging can often be found just a few metres away. Some dog owners know that you have to pick up their dog's waste in a bag, but obviously think that you can leave the bag on the pavement. Others don't even bother to bag the brown mass.

Sometimes there are clean-up campaigns (private or organised by the city), but that doesn't solve the problem: already a week later we stumble across the next cans, bottles and wrappers.

We ask ourselves: what is wrong with these people? Do those who litter our streets also just throw their dirt on the ground at home? Do they not care that there is so much dirt lying around on their paths?

In any case, we say to the rubbish sinners: What you are doing, we really think is totally sh...

The Garbage Problem

There is too much garbage lying around on the streets and paveways, in the parks and residential areas, even in the forests. Some dog owners obviously think that you can leave the poop wherever it was placed.

Any ideas how to deal with this growing problem and how to stop the garbage sinners from disposing their waste in public places will be most welcome!

Stuffed courgettes and two delicious starters

Syrian-Lebanese delicacies

(aa & sbo) For the cooking page in this issue, we didn't just want to write down a recipe, but decided to cook the main dish together and eat it at the end. After all, we needed photos for the page!

Kusa Mahshi

Courgettes stuffed with minced meat and rice

For this delicious dish, we first need to get the most important ingredient. These are the small light green courgettes. They are not always available, and unfortunately you don't usually find them in the supermarket. We find them in the oriental grocery shop. We also need an important tool, the scoop. With this we have to remove the flesh from the courgettes so that we can put the filling inside.

These are the ingredients for 4 servings:

2 kg light green small courgettes.

For the filling:

500 g ground beef

300 g rice

100 g butter

2 tbsp chopped fresh mint (or dried)

1 tbsp tomato paste

2 cloves garlic

Salt, pepper

For the stock:

Water, 1/2 tube tomato paste and salt

The preparation

Here we go: Wash the courgettes and cut them at the top. Use the scoop to remove the flesh. This is a science in itself! You have to be very careful, because we don't want to damage the wall of the vegetable: First, pierce the centre with the scraper until you are about 2 cm from the end and turn it. Then pull it out again and remove the flesh. Put the scraper back in and continue to scrape out the flesh from the hole in the middle by turning it until there is about half a centimetre of wall left at the end. You should be able to squeeze the hollowed out courgette slightly, then it is right.

You won't need the scraped-out pulp, but you can use it later for a soup (or perhaps for the stock in which the stuffed courgettes are cooked later).

Now mix the ingredients for the filling. We find that this is best done with your hands. Then stuff the courgettes and put them in a large pot.

Then mix water with tomato paste and salt and pour over the vegetables until they are covered. It is best to weigh it down with one or more plates and cover the pot with a lid. Let the whole thing simmer on a low heat for 1 hour.

And finally: Arrange the courgettes in a shallow dish and serve with bread.

Enjoy your meal! (We certainly did!)

Sheikh Al-Mahshi

Stuffed courgettes with yoghurt

This is a main dish that is usually served for lunch.

Sheikh Al-Mahshi is a dish from Syrian cuisine and tastes delicious. We would like to introduce you to the simple, original Levantine way of preparing a delicious meal for the whole family, as recommended by Chef Walid Meesar.

The ingredients

First of all, you will need 2 kg of courgettes for stuffing (i.e. the small light green ones as in the recipe above.). Also:

1 large onion, chopped.

400 g finely chopped meat.

40 g pine nuts.

2 kg yoghurt.

3 tbsp starch.

Salt and black pepper to taste.

2 cups frying oil for frying the meat.

3 cups of frying oil to fry the courgettes.

The preparation

Cut off the stem end of the courgettes and scrape out the flesh with the scoop, as already described in the recipe above. Put the flesh aside, as you will need some later.

Heat the frying oil in a pot, add the chopped onion and stir until golden. Then add the minced meat and stir-fry for a few minutes. Then add the pine nuts, salt and black pepper and fry until the meat is cooked.

Fill the hollowed out courgettes with the meat mixture. It is advisable to cover the open end with pulp so that the filling does not spill out during frying. Fry the stuffed courgettes in a pan with the remaining heated frying oil until golden, taking care not to break them during frying.

Now put the courgettes in another saucepan, fill with water and bring to the boil twice. Then remove the courgettes from the water.

Pour the yoghurt into a pot and mix well with the starch. Heat on the cooker and keep stirring the mixture until it boils. Simmer, stirring, for 10 minutes.

Add the courgettes to the yoghurt sauce with a little salt and simmer on a low heat for ten minutes until cooked. Arrange the finished courgettes in a bowl and serve hot. Serve with a bowl of rice and vermicelli, decorated with pine nuts and parsley.

We recommend the following starters:

Tabbouleh – salad made from bulghur and parsley

This delicious Syrian-Lebanese starter is a real vitamin bomb! A little preparation is needed, because first you have to soak bulghur (wheat meal). This takes a while.

Here's what you need for 4 servings:

1 cup of fine wheat groats, soaked in water for 2-3 hours.

1 bunch of flat-leaf parsley

1 small bunch of mint

1 onion

2 tomatoes

Olive oil

Juice of one lemon

Salt, pepper

Finely chop the parsley, mint and onion, dice the tomatoes.

Mix the oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper to make a sauce and mix all the ingredients together.

Arrange the tabbouleh on lettuce leaves.

The quantities are only an approximation. You can vary according to taste: more or less parsley, lemon or olive oil - just try it out!

Hummus bi Tahini – a real superfood

The chickpea puree from the Orient has long since begun its triumphal march through all supermarkets in Germany and is now a popular snack for many. Especially among vegetarians and vegans, it is even recognised as a full meal, as it contains a lot of protein and vitamins.

There is a whole range of different types of hummus in the grocery store, and some of them taste very good.

But of course you can also make hummus yourself, and it goes like this:

1 small can of chickpeas

1 cup of tahini (sesame sauce)

juice of 1 lemon

Salt

(1 clove of garlic if you like)

some olive oil and flat-leaf parsley for decoration

Boil the chickpeas and mash them. Add the tahini, lemon juice, salt and garlic and a little water if desired, stir well.

Pour into a shallow bowl, make a small furrow all around with a teaspoon, drizzle in a little olive oil. Garnish with parsley and serve with Arabic pita bread.

A tip from the editors: Cut a few carrots into small sticks and dip the hummus with them. Tastes great!

Little Fritz:

A cheeky little boy makes fun of the grown-ups

Fritzchen (little Fritz) is the main character in many German children's jokes. Most of them are about his relationship with his parents and especially with his teachers. Fritzchen is very inquisitive and quite quick-witted. Sometimes his questions are the punchline of the joke, sometimes his answers are. But Fritzchen is always the winner of the exchange of words. His job is to annoy the adults a bit or to hold a mirror up to them. All the children like the fact that it's the poor teachers who get the worst of it, and the grown-ups laugh along too - after all, they were pupils once as well.

Fritzchen shows his father a report card. The father looks at it and exclaims: "My God! Sixes everywhere! That's not right at all, Fritzchen! The pocket money has been cancelled! Fritz says: "But Dad, this is your report card! I found it in the attic earlier..."

*

Fritzchen asks his mother: "Mum, how long have you been married to Dad?" The mother replies: "It'll be ten years tomorrow, Fritzchen." Fritzchen says: "And how long do you still have to stay?"

*

Fritzchen's father is a hunter. He comes home and says: "Fritzchen, I met* your teacher a little while ago! Fritzchen is happy: "Great, I couldn't stand her anyway..." **(in German the same as ,hit*)*

*

Fritzchen: "Dad, is it true that sharks like to eat sardines?" Dad: "Yes, that's true!" Fritzchen: "But how do they get the cans open?"

*

Teacher: "Fritzchen, which is your favourite instrument?" Fritzchen beaming: "The recess bell!"

*

The judge says to Fritzchen: "You have insulted a teacher. You have to pay a fine of 100 euros for that. Do you have anything else to say?" Fritzchen thinks for a while and then replies: "Actually, yes, but unfortunately I don't have enough money for that."

*

The German teacher explains that words beginning with "Un..." mean something negative. He asks the pupils to give examples. Fritzchen immediately thinks of an example: "Unterricht!!" (*Lessons*)

*

The music teacher asks: What was the name of Mozart's wife? Fritzchen answers: Mozzarella!

Little Fritz exists in countries all over the world. Our neighbours in Poland call him Jasio, in Austria Franzl, in France Toto and in the Netherlands Jantje (little Jan). In Great Britain they laugh at Little Johnny, in Finland at Pikku-Kalle and in Italy at Pierino.

Wowotschka – the Russian little Fritz

In Russia there are also jokes with a little boy. There he is called Vovochka. That, by the way, is a diminutive of Volodya. And Volodya is the diminutive of Vladimir. Well, we all know a little Vladimir. Unfortunately, he's not the least bit funny.

*

Vovochka has a homework assignment: he is supposed to explain the difference between capitalism and socialism. He goes home and asks his father. He says, "Come with me to the window." They look at the street together. The father says, "Do you see all the cars on the road? If only one has a car, that's capitalism, but if everyone has one, that's socialism."

The next day at school, the teacher asks Vovochka to explain the difference. Vovochka says, "Come with me to the window and I can explain." They look out of the window and see an old man with a cane walking across the street. Vovochka says: "If only one person is walking with a cane, that's capitalism. Socialism is when everyone walks with a cane!"

Little Fritz's female counterpart: Little Erna

In northern Germany, Fritzchen's counterpart was created at the beginning of the last century in the form of Little Erna. This one even had a real role model, an Erna Nissen from Schleswig-Holstein.

*

On a trip to the Hagenbeck Zoo in Hamburg, in front of the polar bear enclosure, her parents tell little Erna: "Erna, don't go so close to the polar bears, you've got a cold already!"

Wais Maarij told us this joke about an American soldier in Afghanistan:

Mail from the girlfriend

An American soldier stationed in Afghanistan receives a letter from his girlfriend back home. It says: "Dear John, I'm afraid I can't continue our relationship like this. The distance between us is simply too great. I also have to admit that I have cheated on you four times since you left, and the whole thing is not okay for either of us. Sorry. Please send me back my photo which I gave you. Greetings, Bonny." The soldier, visibly hurt, goes to his comrades and collects all the pictures they can spare. Of their girlfriends, sisters, cousins, ex-girlfriends, aunts, etc. Together with Bonny's picture, he puts all the photos of the pretty women in an envelope. There are 50 photos in all. He writes: "Dear Bonny, I'm sorry, but unfortunately I don't know who you are any more. Please find your picture and send me the rest back."

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steps Riddle

Steps Riddle

If you read this newspaper carefully, you will find pictures with the questions for this puzzle. They give clues to the solutions. You can use them to test your knowledge of geography.

Below you will find all the questions again. If all the answers are correct, you have to fill in the coloured letters in the boxes below the puzzle in the corresponding colours. Have fun!

This world-famous building was once a church and has been a mosque since last year. In which city is it located?

2. In this city there is a building that is very crooked. What is the name of the town?

3. What is the name of the fifth continent?

4. What is the name of the city whose landmark is this famous red bridge?

5. In which country was an important sporting event invented over 2000 years ago?

6. In which African capital did an emperor once reside (two words)?

7. In this country there are volcanoes with unpronounceable names and hot water from the ground - all for free! What is it called?

8. There are dangerous inhabitants on this northern island - you can hardly see them against the snow-covered landscape. What is the name of the island?

9. In ancient times, the inhabitants of this capital amused themselves with gladiator fights. What is its name?

10. To which country does the island from question 8 belong?

11. A world-famous chocolate cake comes from this Western European capital. What is the name of the city?

12. The Incas used to rule this country. What is the name of today's capital?

13. Everyone knows where this imposing steel tower is located, because since a world exhibition more than 130 years ago it has been the landmark of...?

14. Which desert did many people cross on their way to Europe?

15. For all those who like it sweet: Which province in Italy gave its name to a delicious sparkling wine?

16. What is the name of the capital of the easternmost EU member state?

17. In which country is there the longest wall?

18. In which country do our "antipodes" live? (These are the people exactly on the other side of the world).

19. In which country is the mountain with this "sweet" name?

A note on the spelling of the answers: "ß" becomes "ss", and umlauts are written separately (i.e. ä = ae etc.). Solutions consisting of 2 words are written together.

Flüchtlings- und Integrationshilfe Idstein e.V.

We take care of integration and neighbourly cooperation between of refugees, migrants and their neighbours.

Anyone who would like to support our projects is cordially invited invited to join us - either as an active or passive member or by making a donation.

More information at www.fluechtlingshilfe-idstein-ev.de

E-mail: fluechtlingshilfeidstein@gmx.de



Solutions
1. Istanbul, 2. Pisa, 3. Australien, 4. Kallifornien, 5. Griechenland, 6. AddisAbeba, 7. Island, 8. Spitzbergen, 9. Rom, 10. Norwegen, 11. Wien, 12. Lima, 13. Paris, 14. Sahara, 15. Asti, 16. Nicosia,
17. China, 18. Neuseeland, 19. Brasilien. Lösungsspruch: DER BLAUE PLANET