



MEAN Project Operational Programme as at 25 May 2025

Forcing the dawn, until you find yourself.

"...Consequently, your work in Transvaal, which seems to be far away from the centre of our world, is yet the most fundamental and the most important to us supplying the most weighty practical proof in which the world can now share and with which must participate not only the Christians but all the peoples of the world. I think that it would give you pleasure to know that with us in Russia, a similar movement is also developing rapidly under the form of the refusal of military services augmenting year after year. However small may be the number of your participators in non-resistance and the number of those in Russia who refuse military service, both the one and the other may assert with audacity that "God is with us" and "God is more powerful than men"

Lev Tolstoj to Gandhi, 1910

"If the Samaritan had arrived an hour earlier on the road, perhaps the aggression would not have been happened. I think that <<mercy>>, that is, <<compassion of the heart>>, in politics must also become <<compassion of the brain>>. And then it is necessary for him to love by foreseeing future needs, predicting the urgencies of tomorrow, sensing the coming winds, anticipating collective emergencies, using the time, that ordinarily wastes in repairing the damage, to find the system to prevent them. . (...) Hence the absolute need for those who take on political commitment to look far, beyond the extra-country fences to point out in global terms the outbreaks from which injustices, wars, oppressions, violations of human rights start . Hence the capacity for discernment and conversion that must characterize the man engaged in politics. Discernment of the signs of the times; intuition of the great utopias that burst into today and already become flesh and blood; perception of peace and fruit of justice. (...) Don't be discouraged. Even if it's dark around. Do not back down, even if you have the perception of walking in darkness (...) it is at night that it is wonderful to wait for the light. We must force the dawn to be born, believing it. Friends, force the dawn. It is the only violence that is allowed to you."

Don Tonino Bello, 1989

"Why not organize at least part of the voluntary service in a European civil peace corps? Today there are tens of thousands of volunteers of solidarity with the former Yugoslavia, who have gained knowledge and experience over the years. Many of them are frustrated by being a bit like the Red Cross who can only assist the victims, without doing anything to stop the war. Today there is a strong political demand in volunteering, many are not satisfied with the buffer function that they objectively cover. Why not transform this extraordinary experience into a "European civil peace corps"? "

Alex Langer, 1995

Starting from the teachings of the great nonviolent thinkers and activists of the twentieth century, we decided not to stand by and watch this umpteenth, and still unprecedented, conflict in Europe, we decided to act nonviolence, take risks personally, lose some or much of our tranquility and of our daily life, go beyond welcoming war refugees and intervene directly and physically in the conflict, supporting Ukrainian civil society in a non-violent resistance and supporting the European political community in the search for a possible peace. We want to avoid that only weapons and armies are talking about war, we want to try to put the "creative dialogue" at the center of our action, the ability to transform violated contexts with the massive presence of civilians.



Our action in Ukraine shows a clear will of European civil society: **for the protection of present and future generations, who would run enormous risks of survival from an endemic war and at risk of nuclear escalation, we are willing to risk our lives in order to force the dawn to come out again, so as to guarantee a lasting peace, desired and maintained by the parties in conflict today.**

Our vision

MEAN / EMNA is a specific project to promote peace and humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, launched in Italy by the network "Per un nuovo welfare" ("For a new welfare") together with 35 other organizations. Our main idea is to preserve the transformative power of active nonviolence within the conflict scenario, not only theoretically but also concretely, through a physical, visible and therefore massive presence of European civil society in Ukraine, on the day of 11 July 2022, in the memory of St. Benedict Patron of Europe and the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, a genocide of eight thousand men and boys, mostly Muslims, that Europe and the UN could have avoided.

We are firmly convinced that armed resistance can stop or perhaps defeat the ongoing aggression, but we are also convinced that military force cannot change the context from which the many tensions in Ukraine, Europe and the world originate, while we believe that a massive international presence based on nonviolent action can create the conditions to increase the options and for a future that excludes the use of war in the resolution of conflicts between states.

We believe that organizing the massive nonviolence of Europeans means moving forward a European defense of the future, which is not only an army more powerful than the ones of individual states, but a federal Europe prepared for timely and competent pacification.

Our mission and our actions

After several meetings and talks with Ukrainian civil society associations, we have set the date for a first nonviolent demonstration in Ukraine, on 11 July.

The initiative will be carried out only on condition that at least 5,000 participants are reached, some of whom will go to Kiev and Lviv and others to neighbouring cities. Our immediate aim is to appeal first and foremost to European leaders to mobilize decisively and creatively to implement an immediate ceasefire and to initiate meetings and negotiations, having in mind the construction of a system of peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the world. The war in Ukraine must become the trigger for the creation of the United States of Europe, with its own defensive army and a real civil peace corps. We are aware that the entry of a critical mass of civilians into a war zone can also have harmful and unintended consequences. We will plan our action with this in mind and paying the utmost attention not to endanger, directly or indirectly, Ukrainian civilians and not to strain their limited resources.

At the same time, some participants have already established and / or are establishing links with local associations and institutions for long-term care programs, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and for PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress - programs for children and adults. Twinning between municipalities is also underway, both to help local administrations to deal with the current emergency and in view of post-war reconstruction.

Anyone who wants to bring their presence in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and at the same time claim a more united and mature Europe from this disastrous and catastrophic experience is invited to register on the platform

www.projectmean.it

Participation and selection of nonviolent activists



- Each volunteer is responsible for his / her participation and is aware that by joining the MEAN project he can run personal and physical risks that in no way are responsibility of the project organizers;
- Neither the Ukrainian nor the Italian government are responsible for the activities organized as part of the Mean project to which the activists registered on the platform join for free and spontaneously;
- Not everyone who applies to MEAN will actually be able to take part in the activity in Ukraine. In order to speed up a selection of suitable candidates who can bear the stress and tension of a nonviolent action in a conflict scenario, activists must indicate the names of two guarantors that the MEAN organizers can contact to get reassurance about the degree of awareness of the candidate and the psychic and physical fitness necessary for the action.

Timeline and Places of Action

- The MEAN project will officially start on 11 July 2022 with a massive demonstration of thousands of European civilians in various Ukrainian cities, arriving by trains booked from Poland or other neighboring European nations.
- The Ukrainian civil society organization called "Act for Ukraine", in collaboration with the Municipality of Kiev, will take care of the logistics and overnight stays of activists on 10 and 11 July and authorizations for demonstrations for at least 10 cities in Ukraine, in to which the nonviolent Europeans, Ukrainians and, if present, some members of the Russian civil society dissident with the aggression, will demonstrate together to ask for the construction and defense of the future peace in a nonviolent way.
- To date it is likely that the appointment for all Europeans will be in Poland, in the railway stations of Warsaw or Krakow, and then continue by train to Kiev and in other cities indicated by the Ukrainian volunteers, in agreement with the government and the authorities locals.
- The preferred option is that the various regional groups organize buses to reach the railway stations together, taking the opportunity of the trip for moments of training and socialization.

The MEAN project will last for the entire time of the conflict and at least up to six years after the end of the conflict and may take various forms of nonviolent activism, including the forms of civil interposition forces to foster peaceful and creative dialogue between different national, linguistic and ethnic groups that will inhabit the areas affected by the war or by future negotiations.

Preparatory actions

All activists, in order to take part in the various actions that will be proposed, are obliged to participate in the free training moments offered by the organizers of the MEAN project, both via zoom and possibly in person.

First Actions After 11 July

The MEAN project has initiated two discussions for two activities related to the nonviolent demonstration of 11 July:

1. Twinning activities between European municipalities and Ukrainian municipalities to support the good permanence of internally displaced people who do not want to migrate to find shelter abroad;
2. Summer Camp activities in Europe for children and adolescents in the summer of 2022 to prevent the onset of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders

Crowdfunding campaign



The MEAN project will be supported with a specific crowdfunding campaign on the platform <https://www.produzionidalbasso.com/project/marcia-di-pace-mean-in-ucraina/>

With the funds raised through the platform we want to support the travel and printing costs of the graphic and communication material and support the costs of the first two actions following the march, the twinning and summer camps, as well as the evacuation activities organized by the Ukrainian civil society. .

The IBAN of the crowdfunding campaign is:

IT43M0501803400000017167636

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In the name of: **Sale della Terra – progetto Mean**

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