

Our book industry is currently experiencing the biggest book celebration of the year, enjoying the extremely positive and energizing atmosphere of Book World Prague.

Nevertheless, and for the very same reasons, please pay attention to the following lines.

The heart of Ukrainian book and printing industry is the city of Kharkov, in the east of the country. On Thursday, the very first day of Book World Prague, a targeted missile attack occurred on the Faktor-Druk book printing plant, one of the largest in Europe, affiliated with the Vivat publishing house. This structure produces a large number of textbooks and children's books. Production lines were destroyed, seven employees of the printing plant were killed and dozens were injured.

Fifty thousand books were burned. A large part of them were destined to Book Festival of Kiev, the Knižkovyj Arsenal, with which we have very friendly ties and which starts next week. The story of this event and that the Ukrainian book industry keeps on working despite of the aggression is a great inspiration to us and the proof that books and reading are essential in today's world.

We know very well how important the Ukrainian language, education, culture and literature are for our Ukrainian friends. The aggressor also knows this, and that is why, from the beginning of the invasion, he has purposefully tried to destroy Ukrainian culture. The destruction of the Faktor-Druk printing plant dealt a very tangible blow to Ukrainian culture.

We express our solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues and friends and with the families of the deceased. We pledge to continue to take concrete steps this year, as in previous years, to support Ukrainian education and literature.

We would now like to ask for your support as well, visitors to the World of Books.

At the Ukraine stand you will find a wide range of books in Ukrainian. If you have Ukrainian friends, colleagues, neighbours around you, you can buy them books in their native language, which are hardly available for them at the moment.

At the Ukraine stand you will also find the book « Comics for Ukraine », which is accompanied by an exhibition at the stand. For the preparation of this book, renowned comic creators came together to bring brand new stories from their most famous worlds. The book is published by @CREW Publishing house at their own expenses.

All incomes from the sale of this book will be sent to the survivors and the victims' family of the Kharkov attack.

Radovan Auer, Director of Book World Prague, and the entire team of the festival.