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Overwhelming response to student relief action for refugee camps in Bosnia

Deeply moved by the fate of refugees in a Bosnian refugee camp, the two KU students Madina Farani and Elisa Cankara Alonso have set up a relief operation to provide people in the camp with clothing, shoes, blankets and sleeping bags for the upcoming winter.



Elisa Cankara Alonso (3rd f.l.) and Madina Farani (3rd f.r.) and their fellow students are delighted about the overwhelming response of the Eichstätt population to their aid program. People donated so much that the students had to make the tour to Austria twice in order to bring all donated clothes, shoes and blankets to the association “SOS Balkanroute Wien” which will pass them on to the Bosnian refugee camp.

(Photo: Nowak/upd)

Madina studies Psychology at the KU and visited the camp in Vucjak in September as a volunteer. The camp is built on an old landfill. “You often hear people say that you don’t even want to know what is happening at Europe’s external borders. But this is exactly what I wanted to know“, says Madina. She started searching the web and came into contact with the refugee camp near the city Bihac.

It is home to approx. 1500 men from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria, who live there under devastating humanitarian circumstances: “People are camping on the ground, there is no electricity or running water“, describes Madina. Hygienic standards were far from being met: “Small wounds become infected, people have a fever, there are cases of blood poisoning and scabies.” People are very tired and are stuck in their situation without a solution in sight.

Madina, Elisa and their fellow students initiated a relief action to ensure that refugees in the camp had at least sufficient appropriate clothing to survive the winter. The citizens of Eichstätt have

actively supported the students' action: Originally, the young women thought that two cars would be sufficient for transporting the collected clothes to Klagenfurt, where the association "SOS Balkanroute Wien" has its headquarters. But now they needed a van, which was kindly provided by the Eichstätt Malteser, to accommodate all donations. "This is a huge support for us", says Elisa Cankara Alonso, who studies Social Work at the KU. And even this van will only allow them to transport half of the donations to Austria this week. They will make a second tour with more coats, shoes and blankets in the new year.

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