



# How Automation Professionals Can Support Ukraine

BY LUIGI DE BERNARDINI | WED AUG 24 2022

**#Professionals4Ukraine** and **#1H4U** (1 Hour 4 Ukraine) are the hashtags created by Autoware, my company, to identify two initiatives in support of Ukraine. Unlike many other actions to help the population of Ukraine, the one conceived by Autoware focuses on the professional world and aims to mobilize international businesses and associations to support Ukrainian system integration companies.

During the first days of the war, I saw several posts on LinkedIn from Alexandre Yurchak, CEO of the Association for Industrial Automation in Ukraine, describing the difficulties that members of his association were facing. It was unusual to read about the difficulties of a specific business category, especially of one so close to us. Colleagues in a different country were seeing their lives and businesses suddenly upended.

That made me think about how to mobilize professional communities around the world to help. I reached out to

Alexandre on LinkedIn and we immediately started discussing what kinds of help we could provide. My idea was not to just donate money or goods, because there were many people and humanitarian associations already doing that more effectively than we could. This realization drove my idea to provide support on a professional basis—helping Ukrainian system integrators keep their businesses and their families alive in a market that was suddenly wiped out by the military invasion.

The first major action we identified involved the creation of a network of people and organizations that would allow Ukrainian companies to deliver services using the capacity that suddenly became available due to all the projects cancelled because of the war. A second action was to leverage this network to access specialized services for those integrators involved in strategic projects that stayed active, or even accelerated, despite the war.

I reached out to several international professional associations and received an immediate response from the Control System Integrators Association (CSIA), MESA (Manufacturing Enterprise Solution Association), A3 (Association for Advancing Automation), and ISA (International Society for Automation) to help promote the campaign and support associated meetings. CSIA went beyond this, approving the proposal to give complementary membership to Ukrainian system integrators in 2022 and 2023 to further aid their connection with international colleagues.

These discussions led to the two main initiatives mentioned above:

- **Professionals4Ukraine** aims to foster an international network of system integrators to help Ukrainian companies lacking work due to the war and help fill the worldwide shortage of professional resources. These actions will help ensure business continuity during the war and support the capabilities needed to deliver projects in high-demand economies;
- **1H4U** aims to transform professional services into economic aid. The idea here is for companies to allow their employees to donate some overtime hours of their work to the Ukrainian cause. The compensation for those hours of work, instead of being paid to the employees, will be used to create an economic fund. At the end of a defined period of time (still to be determined), the company doubles the value of the collected funds and donates it to a Ukraine association of its choice, registering the donation at <http://1H4U.autoware.it> so that the impact of the initiative can be monitored and reported on. We created a specific logo for this initiative so that

participating companies can promote it on social media and help drive its momentum.

Of course, each of us can donate on our own, but together, and by involving the associations we are a part of, we can multiply our capabilities and deliver a more impactful result. It was exciting to see the willingness with which these initiatives were received and how quickly interest spread. In June, at the CSIA Executive Conference in Denver, I presented these initiatives to the attendees, and we were able to create a strong network between representatives from TeraWatt (a Ukrainian system integration company attending on behalf of the Association for Industrial Automation in Ukraine) and other CSIA members.

My hope is that these initiatives can spread even further and go viral across our professional world to help make an even bigger impact.

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