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Information bulletin

IFRC Regional Office for Europe

Migration response

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information bulletin n° 2

Brief situation update at 6 November 2015

Summary of the situation

Throughout the year, Europe is experiencing an **unprecedented population movement**, requiring a response on a scale unseen since World War II. Most vulnerable migrants travel via Turkey to Greece, and continue their journey on the Western Balkans migratory route (through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia) towards central, western and northern Europe (Austria, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland as the main countries of destination). This humanitarian crisis affects nearly all of Europe with around 30 National Societies providing immediate and longer-term relief to the migrants.

Since the beginning of 2015, more than 744,000 migrants have moved through Europe. More than 3,400 people have died or gone missing at sea. The most typical countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq. The vulnerable people on the move are in need of shelter, food and water as well as first aid and medical care. The onset of the cold weather and the approaching winter are a great humanitarian concern.

Currently, the IFRC is scaling up its response to meet the migrants' needs through individual, **country-based Emergency Appeals** and **DREF operations**.

Emergency Appeal operations are in progress in Italy, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary. The evolving situation is continuously monitored and the needs of the migrants are (re)assessed regularly so as to best position the support provided to those in need. As a result of this, the Emergency Appeals in Greece, Italy and Serbia have been **revised**, and an **operations update** was issued in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

At the beginning of October 2015, **DREF operations** were launched in Croatia and Slovenia to assist the National Societies' response.

Highlights

- Despite **deteriorating weather conditions**, sea arrivals in Greece and onward movement on the land through the Western Balkans have been continuing.
- **Transfers and registration** processes in several locations were **delayed** by a very high number of arrivals and transits as well as bad weather, leading to **tensions** in several places, particularly in Greece, Croatia and Serbia.
- Lately, the **national authorities** along the route (e.g. Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia) **have limited the number of people crossing their borders** at a given time increasing thereby the amount of people waiting for more than 12-24 hours in various countries. This increases their vulnerabilities as many migrants lack adequate clothing, and the shelters are not always properly heated for the colder weather, and leads to frustration among those who have to wait.
- Due to the **finalized fence constructions** between the Hungarian-Croatian border, increased numbers of migrants are arriving in Croatia and Slovenia.
- Austria has also started the erection of **technical barriers** near its border with Slovenia.
- Some areas (like the border between Greece and Turkey, and the one between Greece and Bulgaria) may turn into **alternative routes** for migrants, especially during the winter, when crossing the sea would be more challenging.
- **Preparations for the winter** are ongoing in the reception facilities and at the transit sites.

- On 25 October 2015, **EU and Western Balkans' leaders met** to discuss refugee flows along the Western Balkan Route. A **17-point plan of action** was adopted, including measures to increase reception capacity.¹
- On 2-3 November 2015, the **Secretary General of the IFRC**, Mr. Elhadj As Sy **paid a visit to Greece** where he met with the leadership of the Hellenic Red Cross, and visited the Eleonas accommodation centre in Athens where the Red Cross is delivering relief items. During his visit, Mr. Sy met with Dr. Ioannis Mouzalas, Alternate Minister for Immigration Policy; Mr. Ioannis Amanatidis, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Dr. Andreas Xanthos, Minister of Health; and Mr. Yiorgos Katrougalos, Minister of Labour. They discussed the ongoing situation and the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Hellenic Red Cross and the IFRC are working closely with the Greek Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, the Greek Ministry of Health and the local authorities to ensure a coherent response.
- Back in April 2015 the European Council had called for an **international summit** to discuss migration issues with African and other key countries concerned. This summit will now take place in **Valletta, Malta**, on 11 and 12 November 2015 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The conference will build on existing cooperation processes between Europe and Africa, particularly the Rabat and Khartoum processes on migration, and the EU-Africa Dialogue on Migration and Mobility. The IFRC will participate as an observer at the summit.
- In the context of the migration response plan, a **number of new IFRC positions have been opened and partially filled** with the valuable support from PNSs, which include Disaster and Crisis Response Delegates (2 persons), an Emergency Communications Delegate, a Water and Sanitation Delegate, a Resource Mobilization surge capacity and a Logistics Delegate deployed to the IFRC Regional Office for Europe. A Relief Delegate was selected and deployed to support the operations in Greece. A significant number of additional positions are in the pipeline due to the on-going operational scale-up.

Coordination, partnerships and funding

The IFRC Regional Office for Europe (ROE) is organising regular WebEx teleconferences to ensure an exchange of information across the Movement. The latest WebEx teleconference was organized on 14 October 2015, and the next one is scheduled for 12 November 2015.

The IFRC Regional Office for Europe is also coordinating closely with the ICRC Regional Offices in Belgrade and Paris so as to coordinate, harmonize and join their efforts along the migratory trail.

The below table provides an overview of the funding situation of the five population movement emergency appeals responding to the Europe migration crisis as of 4 November 2015. The overall coverage is 48%.

| Name | Start Date | Status | Target | Total pledges | Hard coverage % | Total commitments | Hard + soft coverage % |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Serbia - Population Movement | 17/08/2015 | Revised | 3,233,828 | 1,355,497 | 42% | 2,264,269 | 70% |
| Macedonia - Population Movement | 19/06/2015 | Ops update | 3,258,043 | 1,674,705 | 51% | 2,434,950 | 75% |
| Italy - Population Movement | 24/04/2015 | Revised | 2,775,269 | 1,717,985 | 62% | 2,767,145 | 100% |
| Hungary - Population Movement | 05/08/2015 | In progress | 3,582,099 | 911,866 | 25% | 1,009,980 | 28% |
| Greece - Population Movement | 22/05/2015 | Revised | 12,670,715 | 3,254,100 | 26% | 3,821,539 | 30% |
| | | | 25,519,954 | 8,914,153 | 35% | 12,297,884 | 48% |

¹ Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5904_en.htm

Operational context

The response operations (both the DREF and the Emergency Appeal operations) are being coordinated between the IFRC Regional Office for Europe and the respective National Societies regarding the process of implementation.

The below section provides a brief overview of the current implementation status of the operations.

Emergency Appeal operations

Italy

- The IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal on 8 May for 2.7 million Swiss francs to support the Italian Red Cross in assisting 85,000 people with food, water and non-food items such as hygiene kits, feminine kits, and baby kits.
- The Italian Red Cross is present in all ports in southern Italy providing medical assistance and information, relief distribution, psychosocial support, and services such as Restoring Family Links services, translation by cultural mediators, and accompanying migrants to other centers after providing immediate support.
- In total, 3,600 volunteers are involved in the activities to support vulnerable migrants.
- The Red Cross is also present in transit camps in the north where food and health care are provided in addition to managing centres for asylum seekers and reception centres unaccompanied migrants across the country.
- Sea arrival trends during 2015 have been largely similar as in the same period last year – with the exception of September, in which an unusual drop of 40% compared to September 2014 was observed. The open waters' instability in Libya and the longer sea travel has caused arrivals from Italy to decrease.
- *On 2 November 2015, a Revised Emergency Appeal for CHF 2,775,269 was published reflecting an increased number of beneficiaries (from 85,000 to 105,000) and an adjustment of the planned activities reflecting the high appeal coverage, based on continuous re-assessment of the situation.*

Greece

- The IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal on 2 September for 3 million Swiss francs to support the Red Cross in assisting 45,000 people over seven months with food, water, hygiene kits, emergency health assistance, Restoring Family Links services, and psychosocial support.
- The Hellenic Red Cross is providing assistance to vulnerable migrants on the different islands of arrival with 30 volunteers involved on a daily basis. The Hellenic Red Cross is training new volunteers in the whole country to scale up its response, and has deployed a rescue team on Kos and Lesbos. The Hellenic Red Cross is providing Restoring Family Links services, hygiene and health promotion, first aid and basic health care, psychosocial support, and relief distributions. The Hellenic Red Cross also provides longer-term support for asylum seekers including social and psychosocial support and integration activities, and runs a telephone hotline offering interpretation and information to migrants in their native language (supported by immigrants from local communities).
- *On 21 October 2015, a Revised Emergency Appeal for CHF 12,670,715 was published after the re-assessment of needs following the first distributions and also taking into consideration factors such as the length of stay of the people on the move and the evolution of the climate conditions*
- Although the HRC and IFRC is present in the main entry points (Lesvos, Samos, Chios and Kos) as well as the transit point towards the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Idomeni), the needs are still very demanding and further scale up is required. The recent visit of the IFRC Secretary General with the Director of ROE and Head of Country Cluster reinforced this need of scaling up our operational capacities in a collective effort.
- So far, over 45,000 people has been provided humanitarian assistance through the activities proposed by the Emergency Appeal.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- The IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal on 10 September for 3.3 million Swiss francs to support the Red Cross in assisting 110,000 people over seven months with food, water, hygiene kits, emergency health assistance, Restoring Family Links services, and psychosocial support.
- The Red Cross of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is providing humanitarian assistance to people on the move throughout the country, primarily at the border points, assisting with food, water, hygiene kits, baby supplies, and medicines. First aid is also provided.
- Nine mobile teams provide assistance on a 24/7 basis at the northern and southern borders. Each team includes at least one doctor, one interpreter, paramedics and additional team members responsible for distributing humanitarian aid. In addition, the Red Cross manages one trained team responsible for building refugee shelters.
- Around 206 staff and volunteers have been mobilized throughout the response.
- *An Operations Update No. 1. was published to provide an overview of the implementation and progress of the operation so far. No major changes regarding the activities have been included.*
- The Red Cross of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia keeps implementing their activities as planned.
- The impact of the health activities are remarkable in the different target points, where a total of 42,845 persons (22,451 males; 14,266 females; 6,128 children below the age of 5) have been provided with first aid support by the mobile Red Cross teams, and the distribution of food and non-food items has been accomplished for more than 15,000 people so far.
- The Emergency Appeal is currently being revised to adjust the main lines of intervention to the current needs.

Serbia

- The IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal on 9 September for 2.1 million Swiss francs to support the Red Cross in assisting 314,600 people over seven months with food, cash vouchers, emergency health, hygiene promotion, and Restoring Family Links services.
- Following recent developments, the Serbian authorities have limited the number of people crossing into Croatia from Serbia. People are forced to wait on the border for hours and days, and the Red Cross has been providing humanitarian assistance.
- The Red Cross of Serbia is distributing essential aid items near the border crossings including food, hygiene kits, and raincoats in the western part of the country. The Red Cross bakery in Bujanovac is working on a daily basis to provide bread as part of the food parcels to people arriving at the border. Restoring Family Links services are also offered. Specialized Red Cross teams also provide assistance in other regions of the country where migrants are transiting.
- More than 260 trained volunteers and staff have been mobilized during the response.
- *On 28 October 2015, a Revised Emergency Appeal for CHF 3,233,828 was published reflecting a decreased number of beneficiaries due to the changing patterns of migration and the improved coordination of assistance, but an increased budget to include additional winterization activities.*
- More than 165,000 people have received support from RCS so far. The Red Cross of Serbia is also considering contingency stocks for complementing the efforts of the national authorities in provision of relief items for people who might remain in the country.

Hungary

- The IFRC issued an Emergency Appeal on 17 September for 3.6 million Swiss francs to support the Red Cross in assisting 120,000 people over seven months. The operation will focus on the distribution of water and basic non-food items, prepositioning of food and non-food relief items, health care including first aid, screening, and psychosocial support, hygiene promotion, Restoring Family Links, and National Society capacity building.
- One month after Hungary closed its southern border with Serbia, the Hungarian authorities sealed the border with Croatia on Friday, 16 October. This has greatly reduced the number of migrants arriving into the country at its south-western border.

- In cooperation with the Hungarian authorities, the Hungarian Red Cross has previously been providing food, water, clothes, blankets, hygiene items and first aid at several entry and exit border point along the Croatian and Austrian border as well as supporting government-run reception centres across the country. Hungarian Red Cross volunteers also operate an Information Centre at its Budapest headquarters, which gathers and provides information about the operation, donations and volunteering.
- *An Emergency Appeal Revision is in progress so as to adjust the implementation of the activities to the changed and different needs.*

DREF operations

Croatia

- The IFRC issued a DREF allocation of 350,000 Swiss francs on 2 October to support the Croatian Red Cross in assisting 20,000 people over three months with food, non-food items, hygiene items, Restoring Family Links services, psychosocial support, and first aid.
- The Croatian Red Cross is present at all relevant border crossings and a temporary admission centre with 150-200 volunteers and staff involved on a daily basis. It stands prepared to deploy personnel to several accommodation locations and additional border crossings if needed.
- The Croatian Red Cross is distributing food and water, hygiene items, and clothes. It is also providing psychosocial support, Restoring Family Links services and interpretation services for Arabic and Farsi. The majority of relief has been provided in the temporary admission centres while at border points relief items were distributed depending on the circumstances. The Croatian Red Cross is ready to adapt their response as needed and to respond to the changing needs.
- Several reception centres that have been active at the onset are now on stand-by. On 3 November the winter transit reception centre was opened in Slavonski Brod. Following the Croatian authorities' agreement with neighbouring countries, the people are transported directly from the Serbian border to Slavonski Brod reception centre without having to wait. In the centre they are registered and then assisted by the Croatian Red Cross. Also, people are transported from Slavonski Brod centre to the border crossings with Slovenia with no waiting time.
- At this point, 150-200 volunteers and staff are involved in the operation on a daily basis. The Croatian Red Cross is ready to adapt the response as needed.
- *An Operations Update is underway to provide an overview of the DREF implementation as well as to adjust the budget and operational activities dependent to deteriorating weather conditions and location of people staying in Croatia.*

Slovenia

- The IFRC issued a DREF allocation of 286,000 Swiss francs on 3 October to support the Red Cross in assisting 10,000 people over three months with food, non-food items, hygiene items, Restoring Family Links services, psychosocial support, and first aid.
- The Slovenian Red Cross distributes food, water, blankets, hygiene materials and assists with first aid at all five reception centres and two accommodation centres currently in use. The Slovenian Red Cross is providing Restoring Family Links services at the registration centres that are the most frequent entrance point for migrants (Brežice and Lendava).
- 900 Slovenian Red Cross volunteers and 30 staff members have been mobilized from national and local level branches, with approximately 300-400 people involved in the response on a daily basis.
- Following a border closing between Croatia and Hungary on 17 September, thousands of people changed their route to cross into Slovenia from Croatia. The situation regarding the number of migrants and migration routes is rapidly changing. The Slovenian Red Cross monitors closely the situation that is very much dependent on the border control procedures in the neighbouring countries.
- During the period from 18 and 31 October 2015, the Slovenian Red Cross assisted more than 100,000 migrants with the provision of different food, non-food and relief items.

In addition to the above mentioned countries, several National Societies provide humanitarian assistance to those in need as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. The major sectors of intervention are focusing on meeting immediate needs; food, water, first aid, clothes, sleeping bags, hygiene kits; Restoring Family Links (RFL) services; first aid, basic health care; psychosocial support (PSS); managing reception centres and accommodation facilities and activities related to social inclusion and integration.

The IFRC Regional Office for Europe is aiming at introducing an Information Management function. In addition to improved reporting and positioning, it aims at strengthening the effectiveness of the operation by supporting each National Society along the migration trail through **improved Information Management System**. A number of National Societies requested IFRC coordination and technical support in ensuring timely (and possibly effortless) information sharing between RC / RC NS within the migratory route to be better prepared to respond to the needs of incoming migrants and to establish efficient referral systems for migrants with special needs.

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.



Migration Emergency Operations

