

# PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## VOICING HIDDEN VULNERABILITIES IN EUROPE A COLLECTIVE APPROACH

23 January 2006

### In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA076

Appeal Target: CHF 252,581

Programme Update No. 2

Period covered: July – December 2005

Appeal coverage: For live update: [<click here>](#)

For related appeals, see Federation's Europe reports homepage: [<click here>](#)

#### Programme summary

The collective approach to voicing hidden vulnerabilities in Europe works in tandem with national society domestic programmes in 52 countries as well as Federation capacity building in several locations via its country and regional programmes [<click here>](#)

The two objectives of this appeal – increased influence through a strategic approach in advocacy and communications and the building of a Europe-wide cooperation agreement – aim to challenge structural barriers that keep vulnerability hidden as well as add weight to programmes on the ground that are challenging marginalization.

Greater partner support on the appeal was found during the second half of 2005, though still further support is needed. In order to ensure the continuity of activities a 'Voicing Hidden Vulnerabilities Appeal' has been launched for 2006. [<click here for appeal>](#)

#### For further information please contact:

- Lynette Lowndes, Head Europe Dept, email: [lynette.lowndes@ifrc.org](mailto:lynette.lowndes@ifrc.org), phone: +41 22 730 4431, fax: +41 22 733 0395
- Michaela Told, Senior Officer Policy & Advocacy, Europe Department, Geneva, email [michaela.told@ifrc.org](mailto:michaela.told@ifrc.org), phone 41 22 730 4424, fax 41 22 733 0395

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 183 countries. All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For more information please access the Federation website at: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

## Operational developments

This appeal seeks to better align the voice, presence and action of the International Federation in influential national, regional and international forums that could lead to a positive difference in people's lives. The challenges in the region that should be addressed through this appeal remain manifold: The diversity of the population, the disparities in poverty level and demographic distribution, the rapidly changing political environment with increased violence in European cities, discriminatory practices across the region, and the vulnerability of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, as well as the alarming rise of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis infected persons in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The activities of this appeal are not only shaped by the general context of Europe and Central Asia, but they are also influenced by global and local events. In November 2005, the General Assembly of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Council of Delegates of the RC/RC Movement was held in Seoul, South Korea. Decisions on the 'Federation of the Future' have led to further discussions within the secretariat's 'National Societies Field Support' (NSFS) Division on the structure of regional departments.

The budget revision in June 2005 led to an appeal coverage of 49.2%. Activities which were implemented between July to December 2005 are described below.

## Advocacy, Communications, and Representation

**Goal:** Facilitate and promote European Red Cross and Red Crescent activities to alleviate human suffering through a strengthened coordination, cooperation, and equal partnerships, as well as improved advocacy and communications.

**Objective:** Increased influence on humanitarian policy and decision makers at the international, regional and national level through a coherent and strategic approach in advocacy and communications.

### Expected Results:

- Developed a coherent advocacy and communications strategy for the Europe and Central Asian region.
- Improved advocacy support to national societies in their national advocacy objectives and more effective advocacy and representation activities by Federation and national societies staff at international, regional and national events.
- Produced publications (Bridge, thematic brochures) to support the advocacy efforts of the European national societies, including updating of the public website and FedNet for Europe and Central Asia.
- Russian translations of key documents.

### Progress/Achievements, Impact and Constraints:

In order to effectively influence humanitarian policy and decision makers, the International Federation and its national societies have to position themselves on issues of particular relevance to their national contexts. The International Federation aims to support and facilitate this through provision of sound documentation and publications:

#### The Bridge

The Autumn edition of the Bridge with a focus on *Health and Care* has been published as anticipated in time for the General Assembly in November 2005. The issue was distributed in English to all 183 National Societies in Seoul, in addition it has also been disseminated to policy makers, such as EU Parliamentarians. A Russian version of this edition is now available. The issue on 'Health and Care' highlighted in particular the intersection between HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as the challenge of care for elderly people in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, long-term funding for the Bridge could not be obtained. Therefore, for each issue separate fundraising issues are undertaken.

After the General Assembly the planning for the next issue of Bridge has started. The Spring 2006 issue will focus on *Humanitarian Values and Migration*. In addition, there will be a special feature on the forthcoming European Regional Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chernobyl. The issue will be published in Russian and English and will be launched in April 2006. Fundraising for this issue has started in 2005, although pledges were not received to cover fully the expected costs.

The Bridge is produced in different locations across Europe. The secretariat's Europe Department is overall responsible for the contents of the Bridge. Two consultants based in London and Budapest are hired for editing and collection of articles. The layout and printing of the Bridge has been based in the Netherlands. The Russian translation has been organised out of the Moscow delegation. Due to the retirement of the long-term partner in the Netherlands, copyrights for the design of the Bridge were purchased by the Federation and the production was consequently moved to Budapest. This shall allow also to reduce production costs. In addition, efforts were undertaken to professionalise Russian translation, although the final edition of the Russian edition will remain within the Moscow delegation. These changes in the Russian translation will take effect for the Spring 2006 issue, though all inquiries were still undertaken in 2005.

### FedNet

As part of the Appeal 2005 the *FedNet* pages on Europe and Central Asia have been updated. The structure of the website has been newly conceptualised and new information uploaded: The contents of the FedNet pages is geared towards National Societies and attempts to follow a simple, easy accessible structure. The FedNet pages are linking into the public Federation website as well as other sites, in order to avoid duplication of information, albeit ensuring quick access to information from one central location. The FedNet pages are currently updated regularly by the Europe Department in Geneva, though a decentralisation effort is taking place which shall allow also delegations to upload and edit the information provided. In the course of this decentralisation, a staff member of the Kiev delegation has been trained as editor. Consequently, within the FedNet pages a 'Russian Corner' has been established with all documents available in Russian being uploaded. By end December 2005 the FedNet pages of Europe and Central Asia counted more than 2700 hits. The European & Central Asian pages of FedNet will be further expanded in the course of 2006.

### Other advocacy efforts

Due to lack of funding, thematic brochures on HIV/AIDS, injecting drug use and harm reduction or on migration have not been produced in 2005. All available information on these themes, however, is available on FedNet. In regards to thematic advocacy, discussions were held with National Societies to produce a '*advocacy toolkit*'. This should be a simple, concise document which allows National Societies and delegations to receive a brief background, policy information, as well as key messages in regards to a specific theme. Conceptualisation and work has started on this toolkit in late 2005, but will only be finalised and produced in 2006. In addition, a cooperation with a National Society has started to produce an *advocacy training module*. This work and cooperation will continue in 2006.

In regards to humanitarian values, a specific effort was undertaken to enable learning from '*best practices*' in regards to *anti-discrimination* work of National Societies in the region. After consultations with National Societies and considering the ongoing anti-discrimination work, the National Societies of Sweden and Finland were visited to learn about their projects on branch level in regards to anti-racism and anti-discrimination work. All information for these two case studies was collected will be published in the first quarter of 2006. The case studies are aiming to serve as examples for other National Societies on how our principles and values can be transformed into actual activities.

These publications complement the International Federation's efforts to support national societies in their advocacy work. Individualised support has been also provided to national societies upon their request in regards to different issues, be it on themes (e.g. anti-discrimination work, humanitarian values, networks, advocacy in general, etc). This work will be continued in the course of 2006.

In addition, the overall advocacy and communications strategy has been further delayed as the global communications strategy was expected to be finalised in 2005. Discussions were held in this regard so to fit a regional European strategy within the frame of the global efforts. This piece of work will therefore continue and be finalised in 2006.

## **Cooperation and Coordination**

**Objective:** Establish a shared commitment to a Europe-wide cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) for institutional strengthening, capacity building and disaster response mechanisms in Europe and Central Asia.

### **Expected Results:**

- Agreed cooperation agreement strategy for the institutional strengthening, capacity building and disaster response mechanisms in Europe.

- Built strategic alliances with external organizations relevant to the RC/RC agenda, as well as equal partnership among Red Cross / Red Crescent Societies in the Europe region.

### **Progress/Achievements, Impact and Constraints:**

The Cooperation between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the World Health Organisation has triggered further discussions. The global partnership “Stop TB”, hosted by WHO, has tightened its links to the Federation’s Europe Department. Following the establishment of a working group on advocacy, communications, and social mobilisation, a concept paper on a ‘*European Stop TB Partnership*’ has been written and discussed within the International Federation. This European Partnership would envisage a project, hosted by the International Federation and closely linked to the ERNA RC/RC network. Further discussions will be held with the Stop TB Global Partnership in order to agree on practicabilities of this operational alliance. It is expected that within the first half of 2006 this hosted project will be negotiated and will start its activities.

Involvement of the Europe Department in the discussions on *civil protection* within the European Union continued. The European Commission has held consultations in regards to different mechanisms related to civil protection issues, for example on the ‘European Civil Peace Corps’ and the ‘European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps’. These mechanisms are also closely linked to discussions at the Council of Delegates 2005 in regards to the ‘Relations between the Components of the Movement and Military Bodies’. The importance of these consultations and mechanisms thus go beyond the Europe region, but as the European Union is the key actor here, the Europe Departments provides substantive input to the RC/EU Office, as well as to NSFS Division on these issues.

*Networks* are an important facet of cooperation and coordination among National Societies in Europe and Central Asia. Currently, 11 networks exist in Europe with an outreach across the region. In addition, three reference centres with a global outreach are based in Western Europe. Federation support to the networks intensified in the second half of 2005, in order to enable them to further participate in the policy-making of the International Federation. Information on the different networks can also be found on FedNet. This work and support to the different networks will continue – as required - in the course of 2006.

Finally, the preparations for the *VIIth European Regional Conference* of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to be held 23-28 April 2006 in Moscow continued. Regular meetings around the planning of the conference were held. The working groups on the two themes of the Conference, Health & Care and Migration, proceeded with preparations. Consultations with National Societies were undertaken by the two working groups to ensure an appropriate coverage of the theme at the Conference. Administrative and organisational arrangements for the Conference have been made by the Russian Red Cross Society as host of the Conference, with support from the Europe Department. An agenda of the meeting has been set, and it was agreed that three satellite meetings were to be organised during the Conference, covering the Federation of the Future process, Civil Protection and Disaster Management, as well as Networks in Europe. Funding of the Conference remained a challenge. As announced in the last Programme Update, a solidarity fund has been established which shall facilitate the participation of all 51+ members of Europe and Central Asia in the Conference. Communication in this regard has been sent to the leadership of the National Societies in Europe and Central Asia. Some contributions to the solidarity fund have been received, further income is needed. Furthermore, in follow-up of the Berlin Conference 2002, a questionnaire has been created and disseminated to National Societies. This questionnaire and other information on the Conference can also be downloaded from the FedNet Europe & Central Asia pages. In regards to personnel, the Russian Red Cross has hired a Conference Coordinator and the Europe Department was able to fund the position of an Officer based in Geneva for a period of six months to support the organisational and administrative processes of the Conference.

### **Conclusions**

The voicing hidden vulnerabilities programme is now integrated and aligned with both national society and Federation programming on the ground as well as advocacy initiatives at the global level. The Appeal 2006 shall enable a continuation of the activities and further strengthen the focus on advocacy and communications. The secretariat continued support of national society and delegation efforts to align Red Cross Red Crescent work behind a new global agenda aimed at making the Federation’s work more coherent and effective. Reducing vulnerability is one part of this and the work under this programme continued to add substance to work in Europe.