

BULGARIA

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISLOCATION

Following the issue of a second Appeal for Bulgaria in February 1997, a further revision was launched in July to reflect the continuing economic deterioration which has accompanied major economic readjustment and austerity measures. Beneficiary numbers were tripled to 158,000 in the Revised Appeal which seeks CHF 6,340,000.

Existing programmes were expanded and three major new components added: the provision of dry milk to 8,000 children in 100 state social institutions, the distribution of food parcels to 100,000 elderly persons (covered by the US government through American Red Cross), and a programme of health education, targeting vulnerable groups at risk from the increase in the incidence of common medical conditions.

The liberalisation of food and fuel prices has led to a struggle for survival for many families. Fuel, light and heat bills leave little or no money for food and clothing. Over 50% of the population cannot meet their minimum subsistence needs.

The Appeal seeks to provide:

- | 4,500 single elderly persons with one hot meal a day, five days a week, in soup kitchens throughout Bulgaria.
- | 7,000 vulnerable families with a monthly food parcel, containing wheat flour, beans, vegetable oil and other basic food items.
- | 5,000 children from vulnerable families with a free school meal coupon.
- | 2,000 vulnerable families a month with baby food, including milk powder, porridge and puree.

The revised Appeal, launched in July, was overshadowed by the need to issue an appeal to assist those affected by the massive floods in Central Europe. Donors responded positively to the flood Appeal, but unfortunately it led to a falloff of support for the Bulgaria Appeal. Donors are now requested to include the serious situation in Bulgaria in their calculations for 1998.