

FINAL REPORT



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

CENTRAL EUROPE FLOODS: FOCUS ON CZECH REPUBLIC, ROMANIA AND SLOVAKIA

24 October 2003

This Final Report is intended for reporting on emergency appeals

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 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 25/2002; Launched on: 15 August 2002 for 3 months for CHF1,668,000 to assist 450,000 beneficiaries. Budget was revised to CHF 2,275,000

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 100,000

Last Operations Update (no. 3) issued 11 October 2002

Summary

Large floods hit Central Europe in the summer of 2002, causing serious damage to both cities and villages. Many people lost their homes and livelihoods. As more detailed reports came in from across the region, the extent of the damage became clearer. Initially much of the information came from the big cities, especially in the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany. Pictures and news items featured prominently in national and international media. However, it quickly became apparent that the devastation was more widespread throughout the region and not confined to the large towns and cities. Small villages experienced even worse devastation because buildings were not as structurally sound as those in the cities. The flooding was so severe in many rural areas that whole villages were submerged in water for several days.

In the Czech Republic, northern, southern and central Bohemia and Prague were seriously affected, from 10 August onwards. A state of emergency was declared in these areas, plus the Pilsen and Karlovy Vary regions. The city of Terezin was also flooded forcing the evacuation of 4,000 people.

In Romania, the scale of the problem, and the peculiar nature of it, was revealed to the outside world later than in other parts of Europe. Flash floods had been a recurring problem in Romania for the last 12 years. During July-August, twenty out of a total of forty one counties were affected. However, a new phenomenon was experienced in the form of a localised tornado that struck in August creating extra havoc. Facaeni, in Ialomita county in the south eastern part of the country, was hit as the tornado travelled over approximately 50 to 60 kilometres, though the damage to homes was limited to specific

localities. From a total of 2,000 homes in the area, 34 were destroyed and 400 damaged. A long period of drought prior to these other disasters increased the vulnerability of an already poverty-stricken population.

In Slovakia, the objective of the Slovak RC was aid distribution including food items, hygiene items, clothing, detergents and disinfectants, to prevent epidemics. Distribution was conducted through local branches with volunteer support supervised by Slovak RC staff, who provided transport to the affected areas. In the next stage of the operation, help was given to families in drying out their houses as well as material support.

Throughout Czech Republic, the Red Cross branches together with the headquarters immediately reacted to the needs of the affected inhabitants. Branches started to collect in-kind donations. Distributions involved around 700 volunteers. The response from the public was tremendous with 200,000 people evacuated in the country and 50,000 in Prague alone. Evacuation centres became one of the main focal points of the Red Cross work. A basic relief package included hygiene items, flashlights, batteries, blankets and sleeping bags. People were eager to return to their homes to evaluate damage and begin the reparation work. However, in many cases these houses were destroyed. A housing restoration project was started by the Czech RC to assist beneficiaries in reconstruction.

The Romanian RC promptly responded in the emergency phase by providing blankets, bed linen, sleeping bags, training suits, basic food items, hygiene items from its own warehouses, to the value of about EUR 23,000. Emergency relief assistance was provided to a target group of 15,000 people whose houses and livelihoods had been affected. Distribution of food and relief was made to elderly, single parent families and those who had not received relief from the Red Cross.

The overall objectives of this operation regionwide were to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable. At the same time, it promoted and strengthened the operational capacity of the Red Cross Societies (RCS) in each of the three countries. After the initial phase, used emergency stocks needed to be replaced. Pledges received from donors were used to this end. Later, families whose houses were damaged or destroyed required assistance for reconstruction or rehabilitation. Especially in Slovakia and Czech Republic, this work was carried out using money from donors, in particular from the Irish Government.

Coordination w

The Red Cross worked with the national governments. The Red Cross Societies were perceived as strong partners of the governments, as seen in the willingness of donor governments to pledge cash donations. The Kuwait government pledged CHF 748,100 to the relief operation in Czech Republic, the Irish, French and British governments also sent large donations as did the Japanese government. In addition Partner National Societies quickly sent donations either through the Federation or directly to the NS involved in the operation.

In most countries the Disaster Response Plan is drawn up at the state level and then the Red Cross is invited to be part of the agreed plan. The Red Cross is well equipped to fulfill this role because of its network and capacity to quickly mobilise resources. The floods saw evidence that there is a great deal of coordination in disaster response. In addition to the cooperation with governments, effective partnerships have been developed with other aid organisations.

The Czech RC set up its Central Task Force, as well as a number of Regional Task Forces throughout the affected territory, in cooperation with central and municipal governments. Volunteers were mobilised to provide personnel for the evacuation centres as well as other services. Coordination with sister National Societies during the post-emergency phase was successful and some projects initiated at the beginning of the disaster continue. The most successful co-operation was with the Polish, German and French Red Cross National Societies which donated significant material and financial aid.

The Italian RC, in co-operation with the Italian agency Accenture, assisted significantly, as did the Swiss RC and the Luxembourg RC with projects in kindergartens, schools and a Social Home for mentally retarded persons. This last project is continuing with Czech RC employees and a Swiss RC delegate.

In Slovakia, apart from working together the Federation and its contributing funding partners, the Slovak RC, coordinated its relief efforts and disaster preparedness with relevant state authorities. Sister National Societies were part of the operation too. The German RC was involved in equipping warehouses and providing volunteer training. The American RC and USAID also donated funds to help with the relief efforts, in particular the repair of infrastructure and material aid for the affected. NGOs and Slovak business companies Danone Slovakia, Makyta Puchov, DeMiclén, Ignis donated in-kind items. A public collection appeal launched on 12th August 2002 for those in badly affected Horehronie region in Slovakia also contributed funds to the operation.

In Romania, the Romanian RC Disaster Department co-ordinated the relief operation, while activities at the branch level were carried out by branch staff and volunteers. The Regional Delegation of the International Federation provided support by releasing 22,640 CHF from DREF and through the actions of the Regional Response team.

Objectives, activities and results w

Health and Care

Objective 1. Distribution of First Aid (FA) kits and hygiene kits

During the emergency phase the Slovak RC distributed hygiene items to the affected population. This included 150 litres of detergent shampoo donated by the company DeMiclén, 160 kg washing powder purchased by the Slovak RC and other personal hygiene items. In December it also received 5,000 hygiene parcels from the Danish RC, which will be used in future emergencies.

In the Czech Republic, it was decided after serious assessment that there was no need for distribution of FA kits. Hygiene items were distributed to the evacuation centres and to the affected villages. This aid helped the affected beneficiaries to have basic hygiene materials during the first days of disaster.

In Romania, the Danish RC provided 8,424 hygienic parcels, out of which 5,000 were distributed and 3,424 were stocked for response in case of another disaster. Non-food relief items were distributed to beneficiaries by Romanian RC volunteers and in accordance with beneficiary lists.

Objective 2. Distribution of disinfectants

Disinfectants are important to prevent infectious diseases. In August the Slovak RC delivered 210 kg of disinfectants to the village of Lubietova and 216 kg to Orsblie and Banska Bystrica. The Czech RC also provided disinfectants in towns and villages affected by floods. As a result of this aid, beneficiaries could safely return to their houses/flats and use this material to clean the houses thereby preventing diseases.

Water and sanitation w

Objective 1 Distribute safe drinking water

The main goal was to ensure basic human needs and to cover these while the water system was being repaired. During the emergency phase, the Czech RC distributed drinking water to the evacuation centres and to affected villages. In Bratislava and southern Slovakia the staff and volunteers distributed mineral water and tea to fire fighters, soldiers, police officers and volunteers who were building and strengthening the dykes. Water purification units in Romania were used for two weeks till the needs of the vulnerable people were met.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items w

Objective 1: Distribution of non-food relief items, primarily blankets, sleeping bags, mattresses, bed linen, hygiene parcels, to beneficiaries.

In meeting the needs of the victims of the disaster, the Romanian RC branches prepared beneficiary lists and forwarded them to Bucharest according to selection criteria established by Romanian RC Headquarters. Some 5,000 blankets and 5,000 sets of bed linen were distributed. The Czech RC distributed most needed items, which after an assessment were found to be brooms, buckets, shovels and garbage bags and similar items. The result was that affected people could clean their homes/flats and safely return to them. In Slovakia the donation of candles by the Slovak company Ignis Hlohovec was distributed to the affected.

Objective 2: Appropriate and rapid distribution of food parcels to beneficiaries

Beneficiary lists were prepared and forwarded to Bucharest by the respective Romanian RC branches according to selection criteria established by Romanian RC Headquarters. A total of 14,500 food parcels from the American Red Cross were distributed by the Romanian RC, and for a period by American Red Cross volunteers. Distribution was made by Romanian RC volunteers, according to the lists and each beneficiary signed a receipt of the relief. Completed distribution lists with beneficiaries' signatures were received by Romanian RC National Headquarters in Bucharest within three weeks of the relief distribution.

In Slovakia, over 600 food packages and 23 tonnes of potatoes valued at CHF 52,810 and Christmas food packages at CHF 27,950 were distributed to the population of Central Slovakia Horehronie region. Potatoes were also distributed to the Bratislava surroundings. Danone Slovakia donated 11,520 bottles of the energy product "Actimel" product, which was distributed to the rescue units, soldiers, police and other personnel during the emergency phase.

In co-operation with municipal bodies, the Czech RC provided food in public kitchens in villages and towns. The beneficiaries received food three times a day.

Objective 3: Replenish emergency stocks to ensure National Societies operational capacity.

Once the immediate relief needs of the people had been met, it became important to replenish the stocks that had been used. Especially in Romania, where the emergency phase of the operation drew heavily on the resources of the National Society, replenishment of warehouses throughout the country was a major objective. Therefore, woolen blankets, bed linen and footwear, were purchased according to procedures.

The Romanian RC asked for sealed bids and the selection was made on the basis of Comparative Bid Analysis (CBA). For each procurement, a purchasing contract was agreed and the goods were paid for after their delivery based on invoices. For the goods reception, a commission was constituted with the goods registered in the accounts and financial files of the Romanian RC according to the codes. All of the 6,000 blankets and 6,500 sets of bed linens were purchased by Romanian RC within Romania, as it was felt that this would be the simplest solution and would avoid incurring costs in logistics.

In addition to other pledges the stocks of the Romanian RC were replenished by the fact that 3,424 hygiene parcels donated by Danish Red Cross were not needed in this emergency. They too will be kept and made available to victims of any future disasters.

In Slovakia, mattresses and bags provided from the Federation funds were purchased and stockpiled for next emergencies.

Shelter w

Objective 1. To support families in remote areas to dry out and repair their houses

In co-operation with sister National Societies, the Czech RC distributed dryers to houses, hospitals, schools and other facilities that were flooded. With this type of assistance the Czech RC managed to save many facilities.

The Slovak RC was also involved in drying out houses of victims of the floods by providing volunteers for these activities.

Objective 2 To give direct financial assistance to affected families and municipalities

In disasters of this scale, people affected have different circumstances. A flexible approach, as such, is required to address needs.

In the past few years the Slovak RC has had experience of coping with floods, so has developed a standardised system for damage assessment and relief distribution together with state authorities, the media, sponsors and local RC volunteers. Families and municipalities were allotted certain amounts from funds raised, mainly public collections, to cover specific family needs or to help with repairs. Humanitarian commissions were set up to analyse information available and then distributed the funds. The Slovak RC distributed at the first session of the humanitarian commission CHF 11,190; second session CHF 22,207; third session CHF 43,888; Extraordinary session CHF 33,590; fourth session CHF 10,228; and fifth session CHF 9,409.

Objective 3 To assist vulnerable groups in the restoration of their living conditions

After mapping the situation the Czech RC, in co-operation with municipality authorities, identified beneficiaries. One of the most affected regions was southern Bohemia, notably Ceské Budejovice, Český Krumlov, Jindřichuv Hradec, Prachatice, Strakonice and Písek. The main goal of the housing restoration programme was to provide financial means to people, who did not have sufficient resources to fund reconstruction in the houses/flats damaged by floods. The project was limited to CZK 50,000 for each beneficiary. The money had to be spent on expenses incurred in construction materials and work necessary to repair the house/flat before the end of January 2002. Expenses exceeding the maximum contribution were not covered by the Czech Red Cross and the beneficiary had to submit originals of all documents (invoices, bills).

Any individual who could prove that they fulfilled the following criteria were eligible:

- ◆ the owner of the house/flat, damaged by the floods (copy of the extract from the register of real estates)
- ◆ as a consequence of flooding the house/flat could not be fully used (original of the certificate issued by the Municipality)
- ◆ the house/flat damaged by the floods was the beneficiary's permanent residence (original of the certificate issued by the Municipality)
- ◆ the beneficiary belonged to a socially disadvantaged group (copies of relevant documents such as certificate on receipt of a rent, rent notification, notification on the children's allowance, etc.)

The Czech RC local branches collected all documents and sent them to the Headquarters where they were checked and a decision on the contribution was made. This resulted in elderly people (retired), disabled people and families receiving child allowance being the primary recipients.

Advocacy and protection w

The loss of livelihoods and the worsening plight of the already impoverished received significant attention. Thanks to the effective disaster preparedness plans and regional co-operation, Red Cross National Societies in the region managed to cover the needs of the groups of people affected and at the

same time provide protection. There was extensive media coverage of the situation as well as the Red Cross action throughout the affected territory.

The Czech RC Housing Restoration project was covered by cable and local TV broadcast. It was underlined that these financial means were provided from resources the Czech RC had obtained from the International Federation. The public responded positively to this action and helped Czech RC and Red Cross Movement to improve its image, especially in Southern Bohemia.

The Slovak RC made efforts to promote solidarity among the public with regular information about the situation through the media. Through the media, a public collection appeal was launched to help the citizens affected by the repeated floods and related landslides in Horehronie region and counties of Brezno and Banská Bystrica. By launching this appeal Slovak RC called on the citizens and organisations, as well as the corporate sector to contribute. A fund called "People to People" was set up and raised CHF 281,198 through public collection, which was directly distributed to the affected citizens. This distribution was done together with the town and village mayors, the media and local RC branch members knowing the local social situation in the respective families.

After considering the frequency of national disasters in Romania, the national society purchased items that will increase their effectiveness and their profile in future operations. To this end, stickers in a variety of sizes, plastic bags bearing the RC Emblem, and 800 RC uniforms for the intervention teams were purchased.

Assessment and lessons learned

In the emergency phase, the distribution followed previous flood operations, so the Red Cross National Societies could draw on these experiences. Federation procurement and reporting procedures caused some difficulties for the National Society staff. The briefing by Regional Delegation staff on these issues proved useful.

The main lesson learned varied from country to country. In Romania, transport constraints emphasised the importance of maintaining well stocked warehouses throughout the country close to where they are needed. The tornado in Romania also emphasised the need to be flexible in the response to different kinds of disaster.

When replenishing warehouses, both the Slovak RC and Romanian RC chose to purchase items in country rather than abroad. Neither experienced significant difficulties since all the items were available and transport costs and problems were minimal.

The disaster response system at the regional RC level was shown to work well. At the national level too, the response was prompt and effective in all countries, with plans being put into practice. The Slovak RC wants to improve its coordination. Also, there is a need to improve Slovak RC internal communication and information flow.

This is also a lesson learned in the Czech Republic, where an assessment showed weaknesses in data collection, book keeping in warehouses and communication between local branches and Headquarters. In future activities and plans, the National Society will concentrate on these weaknesses.

The cooperation within the region between National societies was excellent. This took the form of sharing expertise and knowhow, as well as material and financial support.

National Society Capacity Building

The activities focused on disaster response and disaster preparedness, two of the core areas identified in the Federation's Strategy 2010. They are also in line with priority programmes for Federation assistance as outlined in the Regional Assistance Strategy 2000-2003 for Central and Eastern Europe.

The involvement of the Red Cross in providing assistance to the vulnerable meant that they came into public view. During the floods, the Red Cross National Societies in Romania, Czech Republic and Slovakia raised their image tremendously. It was commented that the public was reassured that the Czech RC works in a neutral and independent way.

In efforts to improve its disaster response, including to floods, the Slovak RC created disaster units so that the National Society is able to respond better in different emergencies. This would be a significant step for the National Society's capacity building. The activities of these units are outlined briefly in the Plan of Action.

Besides training volunteers to become disaster unit members, the Slovak RC needed to equip its disaster response warehouses and disaster units (e.g. uniforms) as well as to equip materially the headquarters. A Federation delegation visited the Slovak RC headquarters to provide a briefing on the Federation procurement and reporting standards. The Federation procured a 4-wheel drive vehicle from the Emergency Appeal funds and delivered it to the Slovak RC, to be used in emergencies. 100 Slovak RC uniforms, three copy machines, a PC and a digital photo camera were purchased.

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The procurement for this operation was carried out in full compliance and conformity with the Federation's standard for international and local procurement.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

This operation sought to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or long-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

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Appeal No & title: 25/2002 - Central Europe floods

Period: 2002, 2003 up to 15/10

Project(s): P66508, CZ504, RO505, SK504

Currency: CHF

I - CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE TO APPEAL

FUNDING	CASH		KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL INCOME
	Contributions	Comments	Goods/Services	Personnel	
Appeal budget	2,275,000				
less					
Cash brought forward					
TOTAL ASSISTANCE SOUGHT	2,275,000				
<u>Contributions from Donors</u>					
Cyprus Red Cross (DNCY)	7,672				7,672
Danish Govt.via Danish Red Cross (DGNDK)	2,735				2,735
DFID - British Government (DFID)	134,063				134,063
Finnish Red Cross (DNFI)	73,475				73,475
Great Britain - Private Donors (DPGB)	193				193
Irish Government (DGIE)	424,496				424,496
Italian Red Cross (DNIT)	12,185				12,185
Japanese Government (DGJP)	1,205				1,205
Japanese Red Cross (DNJP)	44,404				44,404
Kuwait Red Crescent (DNKW)	740,750				740,750
Monaco Red Cross (DNMC)	19,479				19,479
Pharmacia Foundation (DPS001)	37,405				37,405
Poland Red Cross (DNPL)	70,034				70,034
Switzerland - Private Donors (DPCH)	3,176				3,176
Turkish Red Crescent (DNTR)	24,731				24,731
United States - Private Donors (DPUS)	295				295
AMERICAN - RC/BULGARIAN RC			185,600		185,600
DANISH - GOVT/RC			100,000		100,000
DANISH - GOVT			36,184		36,184
DANISH - GOVT			23,896		23,896
SWISS/GERMAN - RC			4,000		4,000
SWISS - RC			150,000		150,000
TOTAL	1,596,299		499,680		2,095,979

II - Balance of funds

OPENING	
CASH INCOME Rcv'd	1,596,299
CASH EXPENDITURE	-1,596,299

CASH BALANCE	

Appeal No & title: 25/2002 - Central Europe floods

Period: 2002, 2003 up to 15/10

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III - Budget analysis / Breakdown of expenditures

Description	APPEAL Budget	CASH Expenditures	KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL Expenditures	Variance
			Goods/services	Personnel		
<u>SUPPLIES</u>						
Shelter & Construction	677,000	944,174			944,174	-267,174
Clothing & Textiles	161,000	273,379			273,379	-112,379
Food & Seeds	185,000		185,600		185,600	-600
Water & sanitation	8,000	16,292			16,292	-8,292
Medical & First Aid	270,000					270,000
Teaching materials						
Utensils & Tools	52,000		150,000		150,000	-98,000
Other relief supplies	459,000		164,080		164,080	294,920
Sub-Total	1,812,000	1,233,845	499,680		1,733,525	78,475
<u>CAPITAL EXPENSES</u>						
Land & Buildings						
Vehicles	25,000	15,494			15,494	9,506
Computers & Telecom equip.	8,000	18,242			18,242	-10,242
Medical equipment						
Other capital expenditures	22,000	20,972			20,972	1,028
Sub-Total	55,000	54,708			54,708	292
<u>TRANSPORT & STORAGE</u>						
	2,000	6,848			6,848	-4,848
Sub-Total	2,000	6,848			6,848	-4,848
<u>PERSONNEL</u>						
Personnel (delegates)	28,000	27,105			27,105	895
Personnel (national staff)		32,052			32,052	-32,052
Sub-Total	28,000	59,157			59,157	-31,157
<u>GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION</u>						
Assessment/Monitoring/experts						
Travel & related expenses	28,000	11,521			11,521	16,479
Information expenses	9,000	40,409			40,409	-31,409
Admin./general expenses	91,000	8,519			8,519	82,481
External workshops & Seminars		3,420			3,420	-3,420
Sub-Total	128,000	63,869			63,869	64,131
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>						
Programme management	153,000	109,579			109,579	43,421
Technical services	46,000	32,377			32,377	13,623
Professional services	51,000	35,917			35,917	15,083
Sub-Total	250,000	177,873			177,873	72,127
Operational provisions						
Transfers to National Societies						
TOTAL BUDGET	2,275,000	1,596,299	499,680		2,095,979	179,021