

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

CENTRAL EUROPE

17 September 2003

Appeal No. 01.76/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 4,088,229 (USD 2,804,581 or EUR 2,778,207)

Programme Update No. 02;

Period covered: May to August, 2003

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 65.2 % as of date of report. For a live contributions update, click below :

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap017603.pdf

Outstanding needs: Donor support especially needed in the areas of Organisational Development but also in Humanitarian Values.

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Country Appeals from Central Europe, see link below:

<http://www.ifrc.org/where/europe.asp>

Programme Summary: The Regional Delegation (RD) for Central Europe supports fifteen National Societies in the core areas of the Federation's Strategy 2010, which prioritizes humanitarian assistance. These National Societies (NS) are: Albanian, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Serbia and Montenegro. The level of country specific support varies depending on the needs of the particular National Society.

This support is responding to important changes in the region. The RD is drafting a Central Europe Regional Strategy 2003-2006 in consultation with National Societies. This strategy will spell out future directions of Federation support based on priorities defined by the Societies. In place of direct support towards implementation of programmes, Societies expect more support in areas, such as governance and management, strategic planning and restructuring. This is linked to a need to redefine National Societies' role in a changing civil society and in the lead up to accession to the EU for eight of the region's Societies (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia).

Coverage of the Appeal 2003 has been relatively good, but some revisions will be needed. Regarding the regional Health and Care programme the coverage was about 75%, and the original appeal will be revised down accordingly. The activities during the reporting period were well supported. The eight EU accession National Societies participated actively in the EU Road Safety campaign 2003-2004, five Societies organised training and other initiatives related to HIV/AIDS with an emphasis on youth, and five received training in planning techniques, via the Project Planning Process tool. Manuals on Blood Donor Recruitment and Visiting Nurses programme were translated into several languages and work on a website to engage more partners.

The Disaster Management (DM) and Population Movement (PM) programme received 120% coverage. The

activities will be handed over to the Croatian Red Cross by end of September, and the programme will continue until the end of March 2004. The DM appeal budget will be revised due to the income allocation of the Central Europe floods of 2002. Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) training was carried out jointly for NS and governments and training on reporting on disasters was completed. Disaster Preparedness plans are being prepared by four NS, Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) was carried out in one and started in two Societies and translation of the Sphere Standards handbook has been made into all languages of the region.

Organisational Development (OD) can be described as the overarching programme of the Regional Delegation. For this the appeal coverage has been close to 70%. The appeal 2003 will be revised to accommodate different changes in the programme as follows: Some of the activities of the Youth programme will be moved to 2004, the EU coordination will be treated as an OD component, and the Romania Development Project, which was not part of the appeal, will be incorporated into OD. The Participatory Community Development (PCD) programme budget will be revised down as funding was not received for activities planned in all countries.

The Regional Delegation has worked in particular with three Societies in OD, namely the Romanian, the Latvian and the Polish Red Cross. The Romanian RC two-year organisational development strategy enabled the Regional Delegation to present a detailed project to the Capacity Building Fund in June ensuring a grant for the first year. Several NS received support in financial management development and training in budgeting was given to RDRT members.

The Humanitarian Values part of the appeal has been mostly covered with reserves and has not attracted new funding. For this reason the autumn edition of *The Bridge* will be the last one and the planned winter edition will have to be cut. A Polish edition of *The Bridge* appeared with a Polish RC page, and in preparation for the regional Hunger Day campaign, communications training components were provided for the "Hunger Day Campaign" CD produced by the regional youth team.

Operational developments

There was no essential change in the political situation in Central Europe. However, it seems that relations between the Serbian and Albanian populations in Kosovo are tenser than had generally been thought. The development in the "One multi-ethnic Red Cross in Kosovo" process stopped in June, after a joint ICRC/ Federation statement.

The summer saw important changes to the Federation structure in Central Europe. The sub-delegation in Montenegro closed in August. Part of the exit strategy was to evaluate the present situation in Montenegro and find the best way of working with the Red Cross of Montenegro.

The Federation office in Zagreb handed over the population movement programme to the three NS (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro) and the office will be closed at the end of September.

The Macedonia Delegation continued to prepare for the closure of the office at the end of the year. The programmes coordinated by the delegation will be handed over during the last quarter of the year.

Five newly elected NS Presidents and six Secretary Generals from the Central Europe region made a study visit to Geneva to the Federation and ICRC in June. The Latvian Red Cross appointed a new Secretary General in August following assistance in the recruitment process from the Regional Delegation.

Budget holder training for the regional delegation was carried out at the end of August in Budapest. Four NSs sent representatives to the course, which clarified many of the Federation's financial procedures.

The annual Partnership Meeting was held in June in Bratislava, with all National Societies from the region participating. It provided an excellent forum for them to discuss with partner National Societies (PNS) and introduce future activities in many fields.

Health and Care

Goal: Contribute to improvements in the overall health and social situation in Central Europe

Objective: To contribute to the establishment of effective and targeted national Red Cross health and care programmes that lead to reduced vulnerability to disease and accidents as well as addressing social exclusion through participation.

The financial situation of the regional Health and Care programme is relatively good as new funds for the year 2003 were received. Co-operation with EU Enlargement Officer in Budapest is good and an application for EU Public Health Action programme was submitted by the mid May 2003. The EU accession National Societies have actively participated in the EU Road Safety campaign 2003-2004 by planning and implementing the first aid activities for young school children.

Progress/ achievements

Capacity of the National Societies in the region to deliver effective and sustainable HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB) prevention programmes will have been improved. Advocacy of humanitarian values will have been increased, reducing the stigma of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Discussions with National Societies have again highlighted the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. In Albania, the HIV/AIDS prevention programme, including drug prevention, covers eight districts out of twelve, with 180 volunteers working on HIV/AIDS prevention. The main target group is young people in secondary schools and universities. The Slovak RC has continued its HIV/AIDS prevention programme aiming at reducing the high level of sexually transmitted infections. The target group is students in secondary and high schools (approx. 2,000 students), aged 14 to 18 years. In July 2003 the Macedonian RC started voluntary testing and counselling on HIV/AIDS to encourage people to seek testing. The Hungarian RC organised Youth Peer training for 80 youth volunteers on a chosen topic of interest from: dissemination, HIV/AIDS prevention, social group leader, blood donor recruitment. The Bulgarian RC is planning to start Peer Education on drug prevention with the target group of Roma youth. The projects described above have all received financial support from the regional Health and Care programme.

The regional Health and Care programme also financially supported the Project Planning Process (PPP) training for ERNA members in July 2003. Participants from the Latvian RC, Lithuanian RC, Macedonian RC, Polish RC and Romanian RC with members of Central Asian National Societies took part in the training. The ERNA Secretariat faced financial problems, as funding was not confirmed by the PNS until July 2003, when contributions were received for the next ERNA meeting in September 2003 in Latvia. The theme for the workshop will be Advocacy on Harm Reduction, Care and Treatment.

The Federation operational guidelines on Tuberculosis, updated in June 2003, and the educational CD on TB, have been distributed to the National Societies in the region for further activities.

First Aid programmes in the region will have been improved and their sustainability increased. A community based First Aid approach, including psychological support and health promotion components, will have been developed and integrated in the First Aid training.

The EU accession National Societies (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) are eligible to participate in the EU Road Safety campaign in 2003-2004. The

second meeting for the National Co-coordinators was held in June in Berlin and from this meeting the National Societies were in a position to start implementing some activities for the campaign. An initial part of the campaign material has already been translated into the local languages.

A second joint workshop on Psychological Support, in partnership with Disaster Preparedness/Management, was held in June in Romania. Facilitators were appointed by the Reference Centre for Psychological Support in Copenhagen and seven National Societies were represented from the Southern region. Feedback and evaluation from the workshop was very positive with participants expressing interest in further co-operation, both nation wide and region wide.

Capacity of National Societies in the region to promote voluntary non-remunerated blood donor recruitment will have improved, with the aim of contributing to safe blood supply.

The Bulgarian RC and Serbia & Montenegro RC have already translated and printed the Federation manual "Making A Difference". The Hungarian RC, Macedonian RC and Slovak RC will complete the work soon.

Designing the Blood Donor Recruitment web site has started with assistance from the Austrian RC. The next meeting of regional Task Force when the web site will be introduced will be held in early October 2003 in Budapest. The National Societies have been asked to provide updated information regarding their activities in the field of blood donor recruitment.

Social Welfare programmes will have been improved to better meet human needs and ensure a better promotion and awareness of the well being of the population, especially vulnerable groups in the community.

The Follow-up to the Social Welfare seminar held in Budapest in April showed that the sub-networks established involving the National Societies have had only limited co-operation. Therefore the Regional Health and care delegate will see how the networks can be strengthened or made more workable.

A planning meeting with Help Age International was held in May to discuss further co-operation between the institutions. In late July a Memorandum of Understanding was signed for "Age Awareness" training, facilitated by a consultant from Help Age International. The training will be held in late September in Budapest with the regional PCD programme.

The Latvian RC and Lithuanian RC have a Visiting Nurses programme that provides services for elderly people living at home. Both National Societies have implemented the training programme to motivate nurses and volunteers in their work, with 62 nurses throughout Latvia having already attended. The Lithuanian RC has translated and printed the Home Care manual prepared by the Croatian RC, while the Latvian RC has started translation and printing. It was planned that Latvian RC would organise and host a Friendship Meeting for Visiting Nurses from both Latvia and Lithuania in September. However, due to a lack of human resources, the Latvian RC is regrettably not able to host this meeting.

Disaster Management

Important support work was taken by the Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in response to the extreme climatic conditions that were experienced during the summer. An Information Bulletin on the situation and the Red Cross response is available on the Federation website (dated 17 September).

<http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=197>

Overall Goal

Participate in the development of an effective and efficient level of assistance to victims of disaster - man made and natural - in the Central Europe region.

Programme Objective

To enhance the capacity and the know-how of the national societies in the region to respond to disasters, and to provide assistance to displaced persons including asylum seekers through programming interventions.

Progress/ achievements

Disaster Preparedness

By the end of 2003, all national societies in the region will have designed Disaster Preparedness plans within their respective national contexts, which will outline:

I. a well functioning and realistic Disaster Preparedness organisation;

It is not realistic to believe that all fifteen NS in the region will have a DP plan by the end of 2003 (four of the fifteen will definitely not have). But of the remaining, four are in the process of developing a plan. It is also important to underline that there is still room for improvement when it comes to realising the other NS plans. In the future the plans need to be modified, based on the agreements that the NS are in the process of developing with their Governments.

II. partnership with government;

Discussions between the NS in the region and their respective Governments on partnerships are in progress in every country. An interesting observation is that in the Southern sub-region formal agreements between the NS and their Governments exist, whilst the Northern sub-region NS favour the 'letter of intent' approach with their Governments.

III. methods to carry out basic needs and vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA) in a disaster situation;

Vulnerability Capacity Assessment was carried out and completed in Lithuania May 2003. In Latvia and Poland it was started in August 2003 and will run till the end of the year.

IV. knowledge of how to respond in a disaster situation following the minimum standards developed by the Sphere Project;

As reported in the previous Programme Update (dated June 23, 2003) the Sphere Standards have been translated into all national languages of the region. The follow up to this is the training of one trainer per NS this autumn. Although, this was not in the original plan 2003-04, it has been decided that the training will be held in Serbia and Montenegro in October 2003.

V. established channels for mobilisation of international assistance where local capacity is inadequate

The Regional Delegation conducted a ten-day Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) training session in Sutomore, Montenegro hosted by the Serbia Montenegro RC to train more people to join the roster of the RDRT. Twenty eight people participated, with thirteen of the participants coming from the Governmental sector/ Civil protection. The feedback was good and the region presently has about forty five people on the RDRT roster.

The organisational set up for RDRT has been improved considerably during this period. Contracts with team members and their employers have been signed. Additional to this, an insurance policy for team members when on mission has been adopted.

During the first part of 2003 a series of workshops around the region were carried out by members of the reporting unit on reporting in Emergency operations. Funding came from the Capacity Building Fund to conduct these workshops with participants invited from National Societies. The first round as well as the second round, whereby

those who attended the first round meetings act as facilitators for spreading the information to branches, has been completed.

By the end of 2003, a regional disaster preparedness and response framework will be in place based on regional needs, opportunities and threats, outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of national societies.

This will be in place by the end of 2003.

Disaster response mechanisms will be in place at the RD enabling it to be ready for efficient action.

This has already been put in place.

By the end of 2003, the computerised regional database will have been established to track regional resources in case of a disaster.

The pilot project phase of this is done and follow up will be done this autumn.

Population movement

The respective National Societies (Croatia, FRY, BiH) will have maintained well-functioning population movement units, recognized and acknowledged by major stakeholders, integrated into the National Society organigram and strategic plan with a sound supporting asylum policy and legal base in the field of displacement.

The Law on Asylum was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 12th June 2003, but will come into effect as of 1st July 2004. The Croatian Red Cross is mentioned in the Article 22, as having the possibility to carry out programmes of assistance in the State Asylum Home, when approved by the Ministry of Interior.

RC Serbia and Montenegro decided to join European Council on Refugees and Exile (ECRE) during its session in June. ECRE's Secretariat in London was informed about the decision of the Society's Executive Board and was asked to begin the membership procedure.

An Asylum Handbook/manual for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Europe will have been prepared and shared in participatory manner through consultation with European National Societies.

No activities to report in this period.

The cross-border information points will have been providing direct/personalised answers to refugees and community mobilisation is assisting re-integration in Croatia and/or integration in Serbia. The grassroots volunteer info-network in priority areas in Croatia, BiH, and Serbia/Montenegro continues to provide outreach and referrals to the refugee/returnee caseload. The three Red Cross mobile social integration teams in BiH will have made 4,800 interventions, mainly minority returnees, covering up to 15% of the local vulnerable population.

Cross-border communication has been delayed in some of the branches because of technical difficulties, but so far forty five contacts have been made and there is clear interest in the project. The biggest problem for branches to make contacts has so far been locating persons from the requests.

In the second quarter of 2003 some 960 beneficiaries were supported by the Red Cross mobile teams at locations in Croatia and Serbia. Apart from beneficiary-related input, the reconciliation angle through direct contacts between branches across the border should be taken into account. RC Branch secretaries and their colleagues from the five branches in Serbia involved in cross-border information/community mobilisation project visited Croatian RC in June 2003, together with the Programme co-ordinator from Serbian RC. A meeting was held in order to present programme activities, cross-border co-operation and plans for improvement in the future.

The Mobile Social Integration Teams in support of the Winter Appeal in BiH have provided assistance and protection to 2,192 beneficiaries (up to 15% local population covered as well) ranging from services such as small repairs, chopping firewood, relief distribution (more on this can be found in a separate report on the Winter Appeal for BiH).

The sustainability of programmes will have been reflected by mainstreaming, positioning and advocacy. The PM programme was handed over to NSs with the departure of the Delegate at the end of August. The Zagreb Office is planned to be closed down by the end of September and PM Assistant will continue to work with Croatian RC till the end of 2003. Both Croatian RC PM Co-ordinator and PM Assistant were trained at the budget holder workshop held in Budapest in August 2003. The exit strategy, encompassing country specific and sub-regional steps and methods for the continuation of the PM programme with full NS ownership, was presented to the leadership and RD. BiH will have the PM programme integrated into their country Appeal for 2004 and in Serbia/Montenegro it will be integrated into overall activities of NS/Federation. The Europe Department in Geneva will retain policy/advisory role in migration related issues and the DM Delegate in Budapest will follow up the PM programme.

The public awareness activities will have increased the profile of the National Societies and will have helped to influence the thinking of the community and increased tolerance, and thus contributed to civil society.

Croatian RC participated in IOM's public awareness campaign against trafficking by distributing posters, leaflets, bookmarks and calendars to local branches.

A public awareness campaign in BiH to accompany the Winter Appeal saw a poster campaign launched in May. The slogan "Let's help the returnees" reflects the RC BiH aim of advocating for reconciliation and providing assistance and protection to minority returns.

The Red Cross structures in Kosovo are trained in issues pertinent to displacement

Preparations are well underway for the last grass-roots PM workshop for the Kosovo RC structures to take place in September. The Kosovo Office of the Federation, through discussions with ICRC, UNHCR, IOM and other relevant stakeholders and RC structures, envisage the workshop will follow the methodology of the previous twelve grass-roots workshops held in Croatia, BiH, and Serbia/Montenegro, although naturally, with adjustments to the local situation. Croatian RC PM Coordinator will facilitate the workshop in an attempt to cross-utilise sub-regional resources in South-east Europe.

Organisational Development

Overall Goal : Strengthen the capacities and the sustainability of National Societies to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable people.

Project objective: To support and promote good governance and effective management of skills within National Societies and to strengthen programme management capabilities in line with the Strategy 2010.

Progress/ achievements

National Societies will have been committed to a strategy development process.

The Regional Delegation (RD) has worked in particular with three National Societies in the area of strategy development, namely with the Romanian, the Latvian and the Polish Red Cross Societies. The Romanian Red Cross worked intensively to fine tune its two-year organisational development strategy, which allowed the RD to present a detailed project to the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) in June ensuring a grant to support the process for the first

year. The Romanian RC strategy covers a large spectrum of National Society activities, including governance and management, financial management, fund-raising, human resources, program planning and communications.

The Latvian Red Cross continued its change process, recruiting a new Secretary General and working on a development plan. The RD will continue to be involved to help it restructure. The Polish Red Cross approached the RD in June with a request for assistance in solving its financial crisis. So far two meetings have been held over the summer with representatives of the Polish RC outlining the main issues, both financial and structural. The Polish RC is preparing itself for a comprehensive change process, including revision of its statutes.

Red Cross staff skills and capacity will have been reinforced in planning, project management and reporting areas.

The implementation of the Romanian RC organisational development process is well underway. Interviews to recruit key staff took place during July and August, and successful candidates for two out of three positions were identified. In addition, Romanian RC staff were trained in human resource management at the RD.

The workshops on Capacity Building in Emergency entered the second round phase. The national societies in the region had participated in the first round by having participants at workshops facilitated by the RD throughout the region. These participants then took the materials presented in the first round, translated by a professional translation agency recruited by the RD, and presented the material to NS branch members. Although the RD provided the core materials, much work was put in by the Ns in making them relevant to their branch members. In particular, exercises and case studies were developed by the NS. Most workshops have been completed, with Slovenia and Romania holding theirs in September.

Stronger regional networks and learning from each other will have been developed; a regional pool of expertise will have been developed for mutual sharing and learning on the best practices between societies across the region.

Networking was enhanced in the area of youth through the European Co-operation Meeting in Italy at the end of June. Sharing best practices between regions has taken place in Participatory Community Development (PCD) through a visit to the RD of a representative of the Amazonico project in Latin America as well as through sharing the Central Europe PCD experience in Armenia through training of facilitators. A pool of regional expertise in OD is gradually being established, identifying consultants in areas of governance and management, participatory project planning (PPP) and fund-raising.

A clear Red Cross role related to vulnerable people in civil society will have been defined.

Responding to the important changes in the region, the RD has been redefining its ways of working and drafting a Central Europe Regional Strategy 2003 – 2006 in close consultation with the National Societies. This strategy will spell out the future directions of Federation support based on priorities defined by the Societies, who were asked about their future needs prior to the Bratislava Partnership meeting in June. It appears that in place of direct support towards implementation of programmes, the Societies expect more support in areas such as governance and management, strategic planning and restructuring. This comes from the need to redefine their role in the face of changes in the civil society and in particular in view of the accession to the EU of eight Societies from the region.

Financial transparency and accountability will have benefited the National Societies in the region and will have resulted in increased confidence from donors and other Red Cross partners. The ability of Red Cross societies to attract, manage and generate reliable funding for their programs will have been increased.

Participants in the Regional Disaster Response Team were trained in budgeting during workshop held in Sutomore, Montenegro. The training included principles, guidelines and framework for budgeting and budget monitoring in an emergency operation, which, would ensure better funding of these operations.

The Romania OD process, the part of which is financial management and fundraising was finalised in June. A Finance Manager, recruited as a part of this process, is currently working on the financial management procedures and standardised charts of accounts. The Romanian RC is also recruiting an Internal Auditor, whose role will be crucial in the process of improving the transparency and accountability in handling financial matters of the NS.

The Romanian RC Finance manager together with the OD process Project Manger, Polish RC Finance Manger and Bulgarian RC Internal Auditor participated at the Federation organised Financial Training workshop for Programme Mangers. Bulgarian RC is continuously improving their financial management system to ensure that it best serves the needs of their NS, while the Polish RC is at the beginning of the process that would lead towards restructuring their financial management processes. In this respect, the training was a useful learning opportunity for the NS as well as the opportunity to meet colleagues from other NS Financial departments and exchange experiences.

The Icelandic Red Cross consultant has been assisting the RD with the question of how to support NS in resolving financial crisis. This kind of external expertise will continue to be used to help the RD tailor its support to NSs faced with financial difficulties.

In other developments, a RD team visited Czech RC to follow up on the floods 2002 appeal. An audit of the Czech RC books, related to this operation, was done and practicalities related to the administrative and financial side were examined so that the flow of information and funds will be more effective in future emergency operations.

The RD has also been supporting the Estonian RC in a series of training sessions on using new software and latest national accounting requirements

Development of strong National Society branches as the key to National Societies' ability to respond to the needs of the vulnerable will have been fostered. Through Participatory Community Development Projects, and strong National Society integrated Youth sections, greater knowledge of the vulnerable and their needs within local communities will have been gained by the stakeholders. Communities will have been better involved in Red Cross projects and it will have resulted in increased partnerships within communities. Volunteer management will have been improved, and the volunteer expert network will have been developed.

Participatory Community Development (PCD)

In the second quarter, the ongoing PCD projects were almost finished, with the exception being the Montenegro RC which faced great challenges implementing its Micro Project so the decision was taken to design a new project based on the needs of the community.

Micro projects were successfully implemented in twenty communities. Based on the needs of vulnerable people the projects embarked upon included: a community centre for vulnerable people; vocational training courses for unemployed adults; renovating schools; hygiene programmes, including increasing the number of garbage containers in the community and building outdoor toilets; establishing a self help club and centre for disabled people; and vaccination of community members. As a result of the pilot PCD period, National Societies in those countries are more aware of vulnerabilities and know more about how to work with vulnerable people.

A draft PCD branch development tool was launched at the Partnership Meeting in Bratislava which drew great interest among National Societies. The PCD package includes a PCD manual, tool kit and serial of booklets for team members. After the partnership meeting donors expressed their interest in the tool kit for example, the Azerbaijan RC is using PCD materials in its bilateral cooperation with Netherlands RC.

A twinning PCD pilot programme started between the Romanian RC and the Hungarian RC in June with a visit by the regional PCD coordinator and Hungarian RC PCD coordinator to the Romanian RC HQ. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the three parties (Romanian RC, Hungarian RC and the Regional Delegation). A yearly work plan and budget were designed and a proposal was sent to the Norwegian RC and the American RC to raise funds. The first step is that the Romanian PCD coordinator from Hargitha branch will participate in a PCD implementers training session at the Hungarian RC in September.

Interregional cooperation through knowledge sharing continues with the South America region Amasonico programme. The regional PCD coordinator was facilitated a PCD implementers training for the Armenian RC staff to support the Armenian RC branch development process. As a follow up the Armenian RC is starting PCD implementation in Armenia in all branches, than the regional PCD coordinator is planning to visit Armenian PCD implementation in late Autumn 2003.

Youth

Regional Youth Development Programme (RYDP) will be handed over to the respective National Societies at the end of December 2003. Therefore, a significant amount of time is being spent securing the continuity of youth network, its information flow and initiatives. However, at the same time the Programme is trying to achieve all set objectives and assist youth sections in the region in the best possible way.

European Co-operation Meeting (ECM), held end of June in Italy served as a great opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experience. It is a biannual meeting gathering youth representatives from all 52 European National Societies. Many new partnerships between youth sections were established as well as stronger co-operation between Central European and Western European networks. To continue this linking, the European Co-coordinating Committee (ECC) is elected by ECM participants. This year two representatives from the Central Europe region were elected, from Latvian and Slovak Red Cross.

Youth continues to play a significant role in the European Road safety campaign, where accession countries are working closely together with EU National Societies on the issue of common concerns.

In July, a regional workshop was held in Poland, to produce a Hunger Day CD-ROM. This CD-ROM serves as an excellent tool for first time implementers of the campaign, as well as offering new ideas to countries that have already conducted the campaign. Experts from the region created a visual identity for the campaign as well with posters, leaflets and postcards. The CD-ROM has been distributed to all fifteen National Societies within the region and is being translated to country languages. It is therefore a great resource tool, as well as being promotion and dissemination material.

Constant support was provided to Latvian Red Cross Youth in their efforts to reorganise the National Society and therefore build strong and integrated youth section. There was also a conference organised on this topic in May, financially assisted by the Federation.

In June an evaluation of Slovak Red Cross youth section was conducted by the Federation with the conclusion, that a team-building seminar for the Youth Governance Board of the Slovak Red Cross is needed. The seminar shall be conducted most probably in autumn.

National Societies from EU accession states will have been prepared to enter the EU. Contact and partnerships will have been created and developed. Adequate provision of guidance and training will have been provided.

In May the EU Introduction kick-off meeting took place in Brussels for the eight accession NSs from the CE region + Malta, devoted to EU Enlargement issues. The meeting covered the historical perspective of EU enlargement, EU Institutions and the evolution of the RC/EU Office. The role of the RC/EU Office was explained to the NSs and the

support it can lend, such as: providing information on calls for proposal; advocacy; facilitating partnerships and networking among accession NSs and the existing EU member NSs. More technical issues including RC/EU Office priority areas, Funding mechanisms and channels were discussed on the second day. The good participation was a significant sign that EU issues are near the top of priorities for the NSs.

An important conference was held in Budapest, organised by the European Commission Directorate-General of Employment and Social Affairs on how NGOs in the accession countries can influence the policy of the EU in the framework of the social affairs and integrate into existing networks. The conference was structured into four workshops that tackled the following areas: Social Inclusion, Employment, Anti-Discrimination and Gender equality. The Federation was given the opportunity to have its own stand, presenting its work in the field of social inclusion.

During the holiday period of July and August calls for proposal in first aid, education, civil protection, migrants and social welfare were issued and distributed to the accession NSs. From these, the Hungarian RC reacted and applied for partnership with the Eurodiaconia, Caritas and other organisations in the field of social inclusion.

Humanitarian Values

Goal: To raise and maintain the profile of the National Societies in Central Europe, to strengthen their communications capacity and facilitate the various promotions of the humanitarian values and principles reflected in all their programmes and activities.

Programme Objective

To support National Societies in developing high and positive profiles and in raising awareness of the humanitarian values and principles they reflect.

Progress/ achievements

Promotion of the Movement's fundamental principles and humanitarian values will have been an intrinsic part of all communication activities but National Societies will have also been provided with specific opportunity to enhance the level of understanding of the Movement.

Themes covered included: regional disaster preparedness, problems encountered by flood victims in Czech republic, displaced people and returnees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, EU enlargement, blood donation, Red Cross summer camps for children, Red Cross honoured volunteers. Some of the problems for Roma people and children in Central Europe were investigated for the next issue of *The Bridge*. Work on these themes produced news stories, photo and video materials for Federation print and electronic media as well as for the regional web site.

For the first time a Polish edition of *The Bridge* appeared with a Polish Red Cross page in it covering the National Society issues and activities. National Societies in Romania, Slovenia and Serbia and Montenegro asked for support to produce the magazine in their national languages.

Stocks of *The Bridge* remaining from previous distributions (2001-2003) were distributed among the international community in Hungary, with Council of Europe library joining the mailing list that currently contains some 300 addressees (including 200 Red Cross Red Crescent names).

The media will have begun to perceive the Red Cross as a natural ally, a reliable source of independent information on humanitarian issues. Humanitarian reporting in the region will have gained ground and many young journalists schooled in ethics and journalistic responsibility.

In preparation for the regional Hunger Day campaign communications training components have been provided for the CD "Hunger Day Campaign" produced by the regional youth team. A questionnaire for background information on the campaign was sent out to all National Societies.

The Red Cross will have been established as a prime source of information relating to all natural and man-made disasters in Central Europe, through fast response and the provision of breaking news, eye-witness accounts and assessments of need for media, donors and the humanitarian world. Information emergency teams will have been in a constant state of readiness to respond to disaster, ensuring a Red Cross information flow from outset to end of emergency, and into post-emergency operations.

Two sub-regional workshops on the role of communications in disaster management have been developed and are due to take place in Ljubljana and in Krakow in September. They will bring together Red Cross experts in disaster management and communications and help the NSs incorporate effective communications in their disaster preparedness plans.

Related to the establishment of effective communication departments within National Societies, communications strategy and work plan were finalised and approved by the Red Cross Society of Serbia and Montenegro and discussed with the Red Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Hungarian Red Cross expressed their wish to improve internal communications, so that better external promotion of Red Cross humanitarian values and principles can be achieved. A participatory meeting for the Hungarian RC HQ's and branch leaders is being developed together with the Regional PCD coordinator.

The Red Cross advocacy will have placed key social and health issues on national agendas, and contributed to a change of mindset and behaviour for the public good. So doing, National Societies will have acquired greater profile and standing.

Cooperation with other programmes has been an essential element of communications policy. Close co-operation with Disaster Preparedness, Health and Care, PCD and regional Youth programmes has been maintained and the policy of sharing opportunities and resources will continue.

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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.

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