

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

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Appeal No. 01/76/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 4,088,230 (USD 3.312.400) (EUR 2.610.250)

Programme Update No. 3;

Period covered: September to December 2003

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In Brief

Appeal coverage: For up to date coverage, click on link below:

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

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Central Europe Regional Programmes 2004 Appeal no. 01.75/2004. For further details please see the website:

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/017504.pdf

Programme Summary: The Regional Delegation for Central Europe supports fifteen National Societies in the core areas of Strategy 2010. These National Societies are: Albanian, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Serbia and Montenegro. The level and nature of support during the reporting period varied depending on the needs of each National Society.

During the last months of 2003, the Federation continued to downsize its presence in the region, closing its office in Zagreb and the Country Delegation in Macedonia. The Serbia and Montenegro Delegation was somewhat reduced, and the Regional Delegation (RD) in Budapest went down from 20 to 15 people. This presents a certain challenge to the RD, which has recently experienced an increase of requests for services from the Societies it covers as well as from those who provide support.

The overall coverage of the Appeal was about 70% but this support was not evenly distributed among programmes. Health, Participatory Community Development and Disaster Management were well funded, leaving important carryovers for 2004, while Organizational and Financial Resource Development as well as Humanitarian Values and Communication received very little or no donor support, relying mainly on old regional reserves which may no longer be available in 2004.

In the area of Health and Care, the National Societies continued to receive support for HIV/AIDS programmes, where impact can be seen as the Societies are focusing on sustainable and long-term prevention. Many new initiatives were taken and intra regional cooperation was established in youth peer education. The 7th ERNA meeting, in September, was hosted by the Latvian RC. As regards TB related activities, more attention is still needed, while the EU Road Safety campaign is going on well, with active participation of EU accession NSs. The regional task for non-remunerated blood donor recruitment met in Budapest in October. The translation of the Federation Manual on blood donor recruitment, "Making a Difference", is on-going in several Societies and several

already completed this work. A Social Welfare seminar on “Age Awareness” was held in September in Budapest.

In Disaster Management (DM) a series of meetings were held with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to strengthen DP in the Northern part of the region. Lessons learned from the floods in Central Europe prompted the Austrian RC to set up the European Competence Centre on Water, and the present situation of migrants in Southern Europe was the focus of a WDR launch organized by the Croatian RC and the RD. Several training events took place during the reporting period: two workshops on DM and Information/ Communication were organized in Slovenia and Poland, Sphere training for the region was organized in Serbia and Montenegro and a follow-up training of Regional Disaster Response Teams took place in Macedonia. A new Response Team was established in Bosnia Herzegovina. The Croatian RC was supported in its work to provide services for returnees and asylum seekers.

Organizational Development (OD) has become more focused and country specific. Special emphasis was given to change management and financial sustainability. Good progress continued with the Romanian RC OD process, where the two-year strategy reached its implementation phase. Branch representatives were trained in governance & management and fund-raising, and HQ staff in project planning. Support was provided in designing a public image survey and fund-raising strategy. The project has created a new dynamic in the RRC, whose leadership remains fully committed to the process. Work with Latvian RC was initiated with a view of coordinating donor support and developing a comprehensive development strategy to ensure sustainability of activities and agreement was reached with the Polish RC to initiate a process of organizational and financial development in response to a financial crisis. Macedonian RC was also assisted in planning to build its financial and managerial capacities and the Lithuanian RC received support for its project to benefit from a new income tax law.

As part of Branch development, five Societies implemented Participatory Community Development (PCD) projects in areas of health, social welfare, education and job rehabilitation; and a PCD toolkit was completed. The Regional Youth Development Programme assisted in organizing two regional campaigns: the Hunger Day awareness campaign and the Candle March for HIV/AIDS prevention on the 1st of December. The International Trainers’ Team met in December to plan for the future of youth activities after the phasing out of the Youth Officer position at the RD. The eight EU accession state Societies have been supported with information and training.

The area of Humanitarian Values and Communication was closely linked to youth, health disaster management and organizational development activities, providing support for campaigns and training. The publication ‘Bridge’ reached its final edition, while its further development is under consideration in Geneva.

Operational Developments

The political situation remained relatively stable in the region. The elections that took place in early January in Serbia and Montenegro caused lots of speculation and publicity during the final months of 2003, but no major incidents took place.

The representatives of the major donor Red Cross Societies (British, Danish, Dutch, German, Norwegian and Swedish National Societies) and the Federation delegations and offices met early November in Budapest. The Federation’s strategy and its implementation in Central Europe was the main topic of the meeting. The Participating National Societies (PNS) underlined the importance of the Federation’s coordination role in the region.

The Macedonia Delegation was closed at the end of December as planned, with the programmes handed over to the Macedonian Red Cross. The Regional Delegation will continue its support through the regional Disaster

Management (DM), Health and Organisational Development programmes. The RD supported the Macedonian Red Cross to provide an application to the Capacity Building Fund. The Federation Office in Zagreb was closed at the end of September, with the Population Movement programme being taken over by the Red Cross National Societies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro.

The Serbia and Montenegro Delegation in Belgrade continued to handover its programmes/projects to the National Society and is gradually reducing the number of staff. There were only two delegates (Head of Delegation and Organisational Development Delegate) left at the end of the year.

The Kosovo Office was downsized drastically during the last quarter of the year. The process of the “One Red Cross in Kosovo” did not continue as the ICRC and the Federation had expected. However, the Joint Working Group continues to meet and the next meeting has agreed to be held in late January 2004.

The Regional Delegation supported the National Societies in their various needs. The Polish Red Cross asked for the Regional Delegation’s support in their special fundraising case where the consultant they had hired two years ago established a competing foundation. The RD committed itself to giving consultancy support. The Regional Delegation and country delegations/offices supported the National Societies in their preparations for the statutory meetings in November-December in Geneva.

The number of staff at the Regional Delegation was reduced by five (from 20 to 15) at the end of the year, as part of the Europe strategy. From May 2004 the RD will focus its services and support on seven National Societies in the Balkans, who are not joining the European Union in 2004. RD will support the new “EU-National Societies” in capacity building till the end of the year and, in some special projects, also in 2005, but generally the Red Cross EU Office in Brussels will be the Federation “umbrella” for all the EU NSs.

Several donor societies questioned whether, if the capacity of the Regional Delegation remains at the current level, it can run the programmes that they are funding or not. This is a real challenge for the RD in 2004.

Health and Care

Goal: Contribute to further 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 was relatively good, boosted by NORAD funds that had to be used by the end of the year. The National Societies in the region were also active in submitting project proposals for the World AIDS Day campaign and Youth Peer Education on HIV/AIDS.

The co-operation with the EU Enlargement Officer in Budapest and the Red Cross Office in Brussels has continued. The representatives from the Hungarian RC and Slovak RC participated in the 5th meeting of the EU Red Cross Health Working Group in Brussels, 14th November 2003. The EU accession National Societies have actively implemented the first aid activities within the EU Road Safety campaign 2003-2004 and submitted the “success stories” to the Good Practice Guide to be launched in April 2004.

Progress/achievements against expected results

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.

National Societies have continued the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, including drug prevention that started earlier this year. The Bulgarian RC has started the Peer Education project on drug prevention with the target group of Roma Youth. The Macedonian RC is very active in establishing health promotion programmes. The voluntary testing and counselling on HIV/AIDS has made good progress and is well accepted by all parties. The drug prevention programme in Macedonia is planned to be assisted by the Croatian RC as they have an extensive knowledge and experience in that field. The concrete implementation of the programme will start in early 2004. The tuberculosis prevention programme will use the participatory community development methodology, facilitated by the trained social welfare officer from the Macedonian RC and assisted by the Regional Delegation. The Red Cross Societies in Serbia and Montenegro submitted an application for HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. The Norwegian RC donation was used to keeping these programmes running or get them started. The Lithuanian RC, the Polish RC and the Slovak RC have also started HIV/AIDS and drug prevention programmes targeting the primary and secondary school children.

The 7th ERNA meeting was held in Jurmala, Latvia, in September, with 23 National Societies' participation. The meeting adopted the amendment of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of ERNA and elected a new Chairman, Dr. Anders Milton (Swedish RC) and a new Vice Chairman, Dr. Fabio Patruno (Italian RC). It was agreed that the ERNA Secretariat would be hosted by the Slovak RC for the time being. The Macedonian RC and the Turkmenistan RC were accepted as new members, so in the Central Europe region only the Romanian RC is not yet a member, but they will be encouraged to join the network in 2004. Due to visa problems, the representatives from Bosnia & Herzegovina and Macedonia were not able to attend the meeting.

The theme for this year's workshop was Advocacy on Harm Reduction, Care and Treatment and workshops and presentations were conducted on Harm Reduction, TB, advocacy and anti-stigma campaigns. During the meeting and workshop the key proposals were:

- Organising workshops during the next ERNA meeting that take into account the capabilities and potential of individual NS
- Asking the Health Commission to prepare specific recommendations for Federation General Assembly on Harm Reduction
- Proposing to use the Villa Maraini Institute, Italy as a training centre for Harm Reduction for European RC
- Making efforts to increase ERNA membership
- Promoting more cooperation between RC and People Living with HIV AIDS (PLWHA) groups

As a result of the discussions at the ERNA meeting, the Slovak RC Youth proposed an initiative to invite Sister National Societies to participate in Youth Peer Education seminar in Slovakia in December 2003. The British and Swedish RC have initiated an evaluation process for the Youth Peer Education (YPE) that has been conducted in Slovakia. The aim is to further develop the YPE approach and to provide common guidelines for all National Societies implementing YPE. The outcomes of the evaluation will be available in early next year, 2004.

The ERNA web site (www.ifrccee.org/ERNA/erna.html) has been updated by the ERNA co-ordinator. In addition, the Regional Delegation produced an information card of the ERNA to replace the old brochure.

The National Societies in the region actively participated in the World AIDS Day campaign on the 1st of December, funded by NORAD. The Federation material “The Truth about AIDS...Pass it on” has been translated into local languages and posters, stickers and postcards have been distributed in various activities. The further information about the campaign activities is available on the Federation web site, www.ifrc.org

The impact of the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes can be seen, as the National Societies in the region are focusing on sustainable and long-term HIV/AIDS prevention and the programmes have continuation. The activities of the TB prevention would need more attention, in particular, in those countries with high TB incidence.

The EU accession National Societies (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) have actively participated in the EU Road Safety campaign in 2003-2004. The third meeting for the National Co-ordinators was held in October in Madrid with presentations of the campaign activities. Most of the National Societies have also produced material for the Good Practice Guide that will be launched in April 2004.

The regional Health and Care delegate attended a meeting at the Reference Centre for Psychological Support (PS) in Copenhagen in September 2003 to evaluate the sub-regional DM-PS workshops held earlier in 2003. There were discussions on lessons learned, ideas for follow up training and possible creation of a regional task force and/or network. The regional task force would organise/carry out the training in other National Societies in the region and would also advocate and coordinate PS issues in the region. The Central Europe region has valuable experience and trained personnel in PS. Due to the time constraints of both DM and Health & Care delegates, the Terms of Reference for the task force were not prepared and members were not selected. The National Societies in the region have expressed the need for further development of PS issues.

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 regional Task Force meeting, with new members from Bulgaria, Hungary and Macedonia, on voluntary, non-remunerated blood donor recruitment (VNBDR) was held in October in Budapest, Hungary to:

- update the present situation in the Central Europe region in the field of VNBDR on the basis of the questionnaire analysis.
- present and finalise the web site
- work out the strategy to celebrate the World Blood Donor Awareness Day, June 14, 2004
- discuss participation in the 9th International Colloquium

The outcome of the meeting was defined roles for the Task Force members in order to collect information and to coordinate activities in the region. The next regional workshop will be held in mid June, 2004. Representatives from Bulgaria, Hungary and Macedonia will prepare a draft plan/ programme for the seminar in order to introduce the IFRC manual “Making a Difference” on the national level. The first seminar will be held in February 2004 in Bulgaria. The Austrian RC will collect the “success stories” from the National Societies to be introduced in the 9th International Colloquium in April 2004. Unfortunately the National Societies are not responding to the requests and only a few success stories have been received.

The translation and printing of the Federation manual “Making A Difference” was started in late 2002 and is still going on. The Bulgarian RC, Hungarian RC, Macedonian RC, RC of Serbia & Montenegro and Slovak RC have received support from the regional Health and Care programme, with translation. Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia & Montenegro and Slovakia have completed the translation and printing.

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 seminar on Social Welfare on “Age Awareness” was held in September in Budapest. The facilitators were the consultant from Help Age International and the regional PCD Coordinator. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- gain insight on personal attitudes towards ageing
- look at the significance of participatory approaches for working with older people
- develop skills to replicate training activities with marginalized groups
- gain knowledge about the Participatory Community Development toolkit

Feedback from the workshop was very positive and pointed out the importance of the co-operation between the National Societies on social welfare issues in the region. The participatory approach was well accepted and created an enthusiastic atmosphere. The impact of the seminar can be seen in the practical implementation. The National Societies are planning more joint co-operation with sister Societies in the region. For example, the Macedonian RC is planning a Tuberculosis programme using the participatory approach. The second part of the workshop will be held in February 2004.

Disaster Management

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;

Thirteen out of the fifteen National Societies have a Disaster Preparedness Policy. In the future the NS Disaster Preparedness plans need to be modified in line with the agreements that the National Societies are developing with their Governments and their own Disaster Preparedness Policy.

A well functioning Disaster Preparedness plan has to be built on cooperation between all different departments in the National Society structure. This autumn, the Regional Delegation followed this line by organising two workshops regarding Disaster Preparedness and Information/ Communication. The workshops took place in Slovenia and Poland and the common agreement was that every Disaster Preparedness plan should have a part that describes the Information/ Communication system of the National Society in times of emergency.

To a certain extent, the Disaster Preparedness activities are more developed in the southern part of the region than in the north. One reason for this is definitely historical; the traditions are older and maybe the Red Cross during the Communist era in the ‘independent’ states had stronger positions than in the Soviet Union. Anyhow, the Disaster Preparedness activities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania more or less started from zero in 2000 but today they have managed to develop a good structure through support from the Nordic Red Cross Societies and the so called Nordic-Baltic work-plan. This work-plan was revised during the autumn this year, with active participation from the

Regional Delegation during a series of meetings from September to November in Riga, Tallinn and Geneva. The focal point for the continued Disaster Preparedness activities in these countries will be the Regional Delegation in Budapest.

Floods have struck Central Europe several times during the last ten years. Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Albania and Macedonia are the countries that have been most affected in the region. In order to try to coordinate 'lessons learnt' from all these events, the Austrian Red Cross established a European Competence Centre on Water (ECCW) in September this year. The Regional Delegation supports this initiative very strongly and has made it possible for Red Cross Societies from the region to get involved in this work. So far Hungary and Estonia have participated in these activities.

Together with the Croatian Red Cross Society the Regional Delegation organized a seminar on the World Disasters Report 2003. The title of the seminar was "*Forced Migrations - Forgotten Disaster?*" and took place in Zagreb on the 20th of November. Based on chapter five in the report, the seminar was focused on the present situation for migrants in Southern Europe. The Croatian Red Cross, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, the Croatian Ministry of Interior and its section for rehabilitation of displaced people, the Macedonian Red Cross and the Regional Delegation gave presentations during the workshop. About 40 people, representing not only the organisations mentioned above but also sister Red Cross societies from the region as well as several embassies, participated.

II. partnership with government;

Discussions between the NS in the region and their respective Governments on partnerships are in progress in every country. Today, nine of the National Societies in the region have Disaster Preparedness plans recognised by their Government. It is interesting to note that ten of the countries have a National Disaster Plan and in nine of those plans, the Red Cross Society has a formal role. The Red Cross Society is represented, in the National Coordinating body for disaster, in six countries and that another five are in the process of being represented. Certainly the goal must be that the Red Cross Society is a recognised partner in all countries but it is assumed that this will take another three to five years before it happens.

An example of where partnership is growing very well is Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today there is a letter of intent/contract signed between the Red Cross and the Civil Protection, but following the discussions during a Contingency Planning training course organised in Sarajevo December 9-11 by the UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme, this cooperation will develop very quickly and become a partnership where the role of Red Cross is very well defined and recognised by the authorities.

A cornerstone in the Regional Delegation's work to support the National Societies in their efforts to promote good partnerships with their respective Governments since 2000, has been the active participation in the Stability Pact programme Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI). Through this work, the Federation and the National Red Crosses are today well recognised by Governments and other International Organisations like the United Nations Development Programme. The Red Cross Societies have been, and still are, involved in several activities that have developed through the DPPI. DPPI organises two meetings annually for discussions related to programme activities and the latest one took place in Budva, Montenegro. One project discussed during that meeting, with involvement from the Red Cross, came from Serbia and Montenegro related to flood prevention. The project was well received and will be developed further with the participation from Hungarian Government and the Hungarian Red Cross.

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

In the second update 2003 it was reported that Latvia and Poland started VCA in August 2003 and that the assessment will run till the end of the year. Unfortunately, due to technical problems the Latvian VCA will only be in full swing in mid January and run till June 2004. In the case of Poland the VCA has taken off in its first phase but it will only be completed at the end of first quarter 2004. The first phase in Poland includes eight out of sixteen districts and presently planning is underway to start the following eight districts early in 2004.

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

Training of one trainer per NS was held in Serbia and Montenegro in October 2003, even though this training was not in the original work plan for 2003.

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

The Regional Delegation conducted a four-day Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) follow-up training session in Struga, Macedonia, hosted by the Macedonian RC, for members of the RDRT. Thirty-one people participated, with ten 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 further during this period. Contracts with team members and their employers as well as Memorandums of Understanding have been signed.

The pilot project phase for a computerized regional database to track regional resources in case of a disaster, has been completed and follow up started this autumn involving the Red Cross Societies of Macedonia as well as Serbia and Montenegro.

Country assistance to RCSBiH DP programme

Regional RC Mrkonjic Grad (Republika Srpska) established and trained Emergency Response Team on October 20-25 while Cantonal RC Central Bosnia (Federation BiH) held their training on October 21-27. Each team has fourteen members, all volunteers, with backgrounds ranging from medical doctors, nurses, home care volunteers, psychosocial workers, tracing to logisticians. The thirty hour long training included topics on First Aid, Geneva Conventions, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response, Conflict Preparedness, Psychosocial Support, Communications, Tracing and Shelter. The facilitators were experienced staff from RCSBiH and Civil Protection. The teams got personal equipment comprising jacket, raincoats, trousers, sweater, cap, T-shirt, rubber boots and First aid bags.

With the help of ICRC and International Federation, the RCSBiH has established, trained and equipped fourteen Emergency Response Teams in 2003. That means that each Canton and Region now has its own Emergency Response Team able to respond quickly to disasters in its area of responsibility or any other Region or Canton in BiH.

An exercise called "Assistance to people jeopardised by floods" took place on September 26 and 27 in Srbinje/Foca. Two Emergency Response Teams, one from Srbinje/Foca (Republika Srpska) and the other from Gorazde (Federation BiH Entity) had to evacuate affected people, establish reception points, build shelters, give first aid and psychological support, carry out tracing activities and accommodate people. This was the first DP exercise organised in BiH since the end of the conflict. The RCSBiH DP staff gained new experience in teamwork,

assessment, planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting and for the ERTs and RDRT members, it was an opportunity to practice the knowledge they got during training.

Population Movement

Croatian Red Cross National Society 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.

Further development of the cross-border information programme implemented jointly with RC of Serbia and Montenegro was made and the Croatian RC branch secretaries visited Belgrade. Networking with partners in the field of asylum and trafficking was very important and at the PERCO Annual General Meeting held in Geneva in November, the Croatian Red Cross was officially confirmed as a member.

The Croatian RC PM co-ordinator was one of the facilitators at a PM workshop organized in Prishtina in September to provide basic knowledge on issues of displacement pertinent to the Red Cross structures in Kosovo. The Swedish Red Cross funded a study visit for the Croatian RC PM co-ordinator to Lithuania in November, in order to learn about the Lithuanian Red Cross programmes with asylum seekers and refugees in their country.

The Regional Seminar on World Disasters Report "Forced Migrations - Forgotten Disaster?" was held in Zagreb in November. Presentations were made by IFRC, Croatian RC, Government of Croatia Office for Displaced Persons, Returnees and Refugees, UNHCR, IOM and Macedonian RC representatives.

Croatian RC programmes of assistance to returnees (ex-Yugoslavia caseload)

Community Support Service programme funded by UNHCR is the major Croatian RC community-based relief operation to address the needs of the most vulnerable persons within local communities in the areas of return, particularly newly arriving returnees from Serbia & Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Services are being provided through the network of 21 mobile teams attached to the local branches of Red Cross. These include: distribution of relief items, in-house help, technical assistance, small repairs, assistance with administrative tasks, facilitation of health care provision, assessment of needs of new returnees and referrals. Following the assessment of needs of newly arrived returnees, mobile teams often provided first assistance; either directly, repairing small-scale damage to accommodation or referring returnees to relevant institutions for reconstruction or other humanitarian organizations. The average number of beneficiaries of mobile teams in the final months of 2003 was 16,554, out of which some 13,381 people were returnees.

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.

The Guide on Asylum for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Assistance to Asylum Seekers in Europe" has been published and distributed to relevant departments of Croatian Red Cross and other stakeholders in Croatia involved in asylum issues.

The cross-border information points will have been providing direct/personalised answers to the refugee caseload and community mobilisation activities is assisting in re-integration in Croatia and/or integration in Serbia. The grassroots volunteer info-network, in priority areas in Croatia, will continue to provide outreach and referrals to the refugee/returnee caseload.

During this reporting period, implementation of community activities and small community-based projects continued. Local Red Cross branches Dvor, Topusko, Novska, Donji Lapac and Knin implemented various small-scale community mobilisation projects and community activities for children, women and elderly. Projects included distribution of livestock, food for school children, delivery of water to remote villages with no public services, art

workshop for children, community room for elderly and young people with library and newspapers, expert advice to the farmers, legal/administrative assistance to returnees on property issues, health counselling centre.

Branch secretaries from five Croatian RC branches involved in the programme visited Red Cross of Serbia and Montenegro in November to discuss future co-operation.

The sustainability of programmes will have been reflected by mainstreaming, positioning and advocacy.

The PM programme in Croatia was completely handed over to Croatian RC, upon closing the PM Office in Zagreb at the end of September 2003, and has become a significant part of Croatian RC activities. Since the beginning, the programme has developed new activities and increased its profile in co-operation with relevant national and international partners, particularly in the field of asylum, migration and trafficking of human beings.

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.

The Croatian RC regularly, in co-operation with UNHCR, organizes co-ordination meetings and round-tables addressing the issue of asylum in Croatia (focusing on humanitarian component of the problem), involving different ministries and experts in the field, as well as media.

Already recognised as one of the main organizations assisting returnees and promoting tolerance and reconciliation in the return areas, Croatian RC is now strongly involved in all activities related to combating trafficking of human beings in Croatia, co-ordinated by the National Team.

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 good progress has continued with the Romanian Red Cross (RRC) organizational development process. The two-year strategy designed during the first half of the year reached its implementation phase. The first Steering Committee meeting was held in October, and it was pleasing to see that in all areas of activity - governance and management, financial management and fundraising, human resources and communications – the RRC had kept the project on schedule and on budget and worked closely with the Regional Delegation in Budapest. Two new key positions had been filled: Financial Manager and Legal Advisor.

The Latvian Red Cross (LRC) continued its organizational development process with some difficulty due to the changes in the top management. The Society has received short-term salary support from different sources, including the Nordic Societies and the Regional Delegation, but continued to face financial difficulties. It was agreed that the RD would coordinate the support to LRC and work with the Society to come up with a strategic plan by early 2004. This coordination was started during the last months of 2003 and a working visit was planned for early December – but had to be moved to January due to the flu epidemic. The LRC produced an Organizational Development Plan 2004-2006 and a Transition Plan as a road map towards sustainability. These will be further developed during early 2004 together with the RD.

The Regional Delegation had committed itself to support the Polish Red Cross (PRC) financial and organizational development but, due to a number of constraints, the process did not properly start until towards end of the year. A consultant visit is planned for January to initiate a Plan of Action. As a new development, work started with the Macedonian Red Cross (MRC) to support the Society in strengthening its financial and managerial capacities. As the Federation country delegation was closed at the end of the year, the MRC will now take full ownership of its development plan, supported by the RD. During two visits from the RD, a plan was agreed on for which support will be sought from the Federation Capacity Building Fund.

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

The Romanian Red Cross development project includes a number of activities aiming at reinforcing the skills and capacities of the Society's governance and management structure. During the reporting period about 70 RRC Branch Managers and Presidents were trained in three separate workshops in good governance and management as well as fund-raising. RD staff and consultants from the region were used to facilitate these workshops, which also served as a forum for reflection about the change process. The HQ staff was trained in Project Planning Process (PPP). This will be extended to branches in 2004, using the newly translated PPP Manual. Furthermore, the Society produced staff regulations and a code of conduct for staff. The Hungarian Red Cross was also supported in training its staff in PPP and in organizing an English language course for its HQ staff. A number of Societies used the opportunity of doing follow-up training on reporting based on the training provided by the RD in 2002.

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 programmes will have been increased.

Representatives of Hungarian and Lithuanian Red Cross met in order to exchange experience and knowledge related to fundraising. This meeting helped Lithuanian RC to develop, with support from the RD, a fundraising project that aims to collect 2% of income tax, from Lithuanian income tax payers. This effort of the Lithuanian RC is significant as most of the NS' income comes from foreign donations, which are fading away. The project has strong components of volunteer training and recruitment and RC image awareness. Budapest RD and German RC financially support project implementation, which started in October.

As a part of Romanian RC (RRC) organizational development process, financially secured by the capacity building fund, three training sessions on fundraising within the Red Cross context took place. Two thirds of RRC branch directors were trained, while the rest will be trained in January 2004. This gave participants an opportunity to learn from each other and clarify issues related to community based Fund Raising. As a result of these training sessions, branch directors have developed their fundraising plans.

At the level of the RRC headquarters, fundraising committee consisting of representatives from the RRC, University of Bucharest, media, PR and business sector met in order to jointly support RRC in creating its fundraising strategy. Once the results of the public image survey, which is in process, are known, fundraising committee will meet again.

While trying to attract new funding for its programmes, as described above, RRC is strengthening its financial management system. Newly recruited finance manager and internal auditor, together with the RRC Treasurer are developing financial procedures that will be soon disseminated to all the branches. The end goal is to ensure unified, transparent and accountable fund management.

Bulgarian RC is in its end phase of implementation of the project to strengthen NS' financial department. It focuses on integration of all branches and headquarters into integrated accounting software. At the end it will contribute to better financial information sharing.

Polish RC has asked for expert support in financial management. Thanks to Icelandic RC support, a financial management consultant with previous experience of the NS will visit the NS in early 2004.

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) became a stronger activity in the countries involved. Both operational and participating Societies recognized the good result of the community-based programmes. During the autumn, a PCD tool package was finalized, five NS implemented community based programmes in areas of health, social welfare, education and job rehabilitation. PCD brochures were translated and published in five languages: Bulgarian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Serbian and Romanian. In September a PCD coordinator's workshop was held to improve and finalize the PCD materials based on lessons learned as well as to prepare for the future. The existing Regional PCD coordinator team was reinforced and an e-mail group was established.

The integration of the PCD approach with core programme areas was supported by a joint workshop for social welfare coordinators and PCD coordinators in September. The workshop was facilitated by a consultant from Help Age International and co-facilitated by the regional PCD coordinator. As a result, NS experts in the respective areas started to cooperate and create common plans for the future.

In all NSs where PCD was implemented in 2002, pending budgets were closed before the end of 2003. Micro projects were finalized in Serbia and Montenegro and additional activities were carried out in Bulgaria and Hungary. The realization of PCD 2003 started in Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. In all three countries training for PCD Implementers (based on the new PCD package) was organised. New communities were chosen and Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) was carried out. At the end of 2003, local communities were submitting micro project concepts for HQs.

In Serbia and Montenegro, a joint pilot project on Needs Assessment and PCD was proposed, which would include a basic needs assessment tool for the branches. The joint project preparation was carried out in 2003 and communities for PCD implementation were chosen. Field activities will be carried out in 2004. The twinning cooperation between the Romanian RC and the Hungarian RC continued according to the plan. Exchange visits as well as the training of Romanian local coordinator were carried out.

The Regional Youth Development Programme, in the last quarter, was working towards phasing out and handing over to National Societies' youth sections. However, all of September was spent on preparation for the biggest regional awareness campaign, Hunger Day, where youth plays a key role. This was the third year of the Hunger Day campaign and every year the campaign is growing both in national and regional context. This year on the 16th of October, ten Central European countries, with more than 500 local branches, undertook activities such as collecting food items, clothes, organising lectures and round tables to inform the general public about issues of poverty, under nourishment and hunger in their respective countries. Several tons of food were distributed to thousands of identified beneficiaries (either elderly people, homeless or children from socially threatened families), while the sense of solidarity and awareness was raised among general public.

Regional Delegation, namely Youth Development Programme, Communication Unit and Health and Care Programme, supported ten National Societies, not only with advice, CD-ROMs and press releases, but also with financial support, based on the number of local branches involved in the campaign. In the beginning of November, an evaluation of the campaign was made, showing big impacts on country and grass root level, as well as the enormous satisfaction of organisers.

The second part of the November was spent on the preparations of the second regional awareness campaign Candle March, which is organised to commemorate the 1st of December. Various activities on the topic of HIV/AIDS and its prevention were organised in eight countries within the region. The Health and Care Programme, under the leadership of Youth Programme, distributed funds that had been raised for this purpose. At the same time, another regional peer HIV/AIDS education seminar was organised by Slovak Red Cross Youth, which also served as an evaluation of peer education seminars around the region. Some conclusions were drawn, thus improving these sort of activities in the region.

International Trainers Team meeting took place in the middle of December, where plans for the future regional youth work were prepared. While there will be no Youth Officer position anymore, the twelve members of International Trainers Team will take an even more active part in youth work around the region. They will be the ones who will take care of the regional network and systems established during the past four years. A pool of youth experts is established, with various abilities and areas of their expertise that can be called on for assistance in organising different workshops and seminars. Two more regional activities were planned for the 2004. In April, the 7th Regional Youth Conference and in August a workshop was organised by Slovak Red Cross Youth, dealing with improvements for the Candle March awareness campaign.

The regional youth web-site was reorganised and re-launched, serving as a resource tool to National Societies' youth sections. There, one can find all activities organised in the region by Regional Youth Development Programme from 1998-2004, contact details and many useful tools and manuals as downloads.

The region is well prepared for continuation of excellent youth work, both on national and regional level. However, conference in April 2004 will serve as an evaluation of this period, without Regional Youth Officer and the floor will be given to youth sections to express their opinions and propose new approaches and options. It is planned that conference's outcomes will be presented at the Partnership Meeting, May 2004, to the National Society leadership.

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.

Networks are growing in importance in different areas of activity. In work related to HIV/AIDS, the all-European network ERNA held its 7th meeting in Latvia in September and was hosted by the Slovak RC. All Central European NSs except Romania are members. The regional Task Force on voluntary, non-remunerated blood donor recruitment was held in October in Budapest, with new members from Bulgaria, Hungary and Macedonia. In Disaster Management, the RD conducted a four-day Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) follow-up training session in Macedonia. The region presently has about forty-five people on the RDRT roster. The pilot phase of the establishment of a computerised regional database to track regional resources in case of a disaster has been done. The Youth network played a significant role in the Hunger Day and HIV/AIDS campaigns in the region and will ensure the continued support for youth activities in 2004 when there will no longer be a youth staff position at the RD. A meeting to plan this took place at the end of December in Budapest.

Regionally recruited consultants have been increasingly used in areas such as Fund-raising (Bulgaria), Organizational Development (Hungary) or VCA (Poland). Knowledge sharing has also taken place through former delegates turned consultants who have worked in different Societies in the region and are able to share best practices. It is foreseen that work will start to establish a regional pool of experts early in 2004.

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 September, the Programme Officer from the RC/EU office in Brussels visited the Slovak RC, Latvian RC, Lithuanian RC, Estonian RC and the Hungarian RC – the last one together with the Regional EU Enlargement Officer. The aim of these visits was to make a presentation on funding mechanisms, as requested by the NS after the kick-off meeting in May in Brussels. Also there was an opportunity to meet the programme coordinators of these NSs and the people that are, and will be, in charge of EU related issues once their countries become EU members.

Information on various training opportunities both abroad and nationally have been distributed to all accession NSs (on EU funding for NGOs in Brussels, on structural and cohesion funds in Czech republic, Slovakia and Hungary). The Hungarian RC and Slovak RC took part in these trainings. An information pack from the Brussels training with useful links to EU institutions, funding opportunities and budget lines was prepared and distributed to all accession NSs.

Six accession NSs (Slovak, Hungarian, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Polish RC) attended the RC/EU Office annual meeting of EU NS National Operations Directors, as observers. This event allowed them to meet their counterparts from EU member NSs, to get acquainted with core activity areas and to establish new partnerships.

The European Commission Delegations in all accession NSs were contacted in order to identify a partner from the local authorities who will be in charge of the Structural funds as of 1st of May, 2004. The idea behind this is that the accession NSs have a contact person in place to help them use more effectively the funding opportunities from the EU budget lines that will substitute the PHARE and other pre-accession mechanisms. Once the database is established, it will be made available to the accession NSs.

The Hungarian RC became a partner of Eurodiaconia and Caritas in a Europe-wide social inclusion project funded by the European Commission. Together with the Austrian RC it also initiated a project proposal on health care for the disabled. The Slovak and Hungarian RC participated in the Leonardo project on cultural awareness in nursing. Of the 2nd round accession NSs (Romania, Bulgaria), the Bulgarian RC has expressed active interest in EU issues and were duly provided with all the information related to the EU enlargement.

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.

The Bridge, the Central Europe regional publication, in its winter edition highlighted the problems of the Roma people in Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic, the plight of poor and abandoned children in new market economies and some social issues on the agendas of the NSs in Slovenia, Slovakia and Estonia.

The Romanian RC translated The Bridge into Romanian language, making it the third national edition after the Hungarian and the Polish ones. All three National Societies decided to use one page in the magazine to highlight their home issues. The Romanian edition is supported by the British RC, while the other two by the Dutch RC and by the regional delegation.

The winter 2003/2004 edition of The Bridge was the last one due to the region "changing its shape" with ten countries joining the EU. Further development of this regional publication is under consideration at the Europe Department in Geneva, but the magazine ceased to exist as a publication of the regional delegation.

The problems encountered by refugees, displaced people and returnees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro were highlighted in publications after field trips to the respective countries.

Hunger and poverty in central Europe were top of the agendas in eleven National Societies that took part in the fourth round of the regional Food Day campaign in which the RD provided coordination and information support.

Harm reduction and HIV/AIDS problems were discussed during the ERNA meeting in Riga in September and the AIDS Day in December.

In October, in support of the Hungarian RC workshop on fund-raising for the Ukrainian RC managers, the regional delegation provided a component on communications.

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.

During the regional Hunger Day campaign, all participating National Societies, with support from the RD, provided press releases and background information. The anti-AIDS campaign also saw the NSs as active partners and sources of relevant information for the national media.

An international media trip to Serbia and Montenegro in November highlighted some of the issues of displaced people. BBC radio, Agence France Press, Le Monde and other international media, in addition to the Federation media, took part in the trip, organised together by the Serbia and Montenegro RC and the Media Service in Geneva.

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.

In November, the World Disaster Report was presented to the national and local representatives of the international media and other relevant organisations at the regional seminar in Zagreb for Balkan counties (supported by the regional DP Delegate) and at a press conference in Bucharest (supported by the regional information delegate). The results proved that the Report needs more promotion at the national level and can help raise awareness of other Red Cross activities in the country. The fact that the Report was presented quite late in the year did not detract from the level of interest in it and it received good media coverage.

Two sub-regional workshops on the role of communications in disaster management took place in Ljubljana and in Krakow in September. They brought together Red Cross experts in disaster management and communications and helped the NSs incorporate effective communications in their disaster preparedness plans.

The Romanian Red Cross Society started implementation of its communications plans with the publication of a quarterly information bulletin and the public image survey.

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.

Due to lack of time and other commitments the information delegate did not manage to cover a number of activities connected with the growing regional PCD project, which definitely needs attention and promotion in the Federation and other media.

Although news was updated on the regional web-site and it was a good place for promotion of the issues raised in The Bridge, in its electronic version, other parts of the site were not updated due to lack of time and resources. A new page was developed by the regional health department on Blood Donation, which added to two other sites of the Youth and ERNA. The ERNA site was taken over by the ERNA coordinator in Bratislava. Although the regional site was a good way of exchanging experience, issues for advocacy, research and best practices, it always lacked human resources, namely a permanent web-site manager.

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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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