

Report 2006-2007



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Voicing hidden vulnerabilities in Europe and central Asia

Appeal No. MAA66002

03/04/2008

This report covers the period of 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2007 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



A Red Cross volunteer speaking to the national media on the Red Cross action in response to Tuberculosis during a campaign in Belgorod, Russia in March 2006.

Photo by V.Melnik

In brief

Programme Summary: The collective approach to voicing hidden vulnerabilities in Europe and central Asia works in tandem with the National Societies' domestic programmes in 53 countries as well as the International Federation's capacity building activities in several locations via its country and regional programmes.

Goal: The overall goal of the programme is to facilitate and promote European Red Cross and Red Crescent activities to alleviate human suffering through strengthened coordination, cooperation and equal partnerships, as well as improved advocacy and communications.

It was decided in the course of 2006 that the budget to support the VII European Regional Conference would no longer be part of the Voicing Hidden Vulnerabilities appeal. All organizational and administrative support to the regional conference was placed, as of January 2007, directly under the International Federation's Europe department and accordingly was reported upon separately.

Also the position of senior officer on policy and advocacy ceased to exist as of November 2006. To reflect these changes, the appeal budget was revised.

At the same time, a third objective was introduced to this appeal to appropriately reflect the work which is carried out to support the clarifications of roles and responsibilities in the governance and management of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across the region.

Needs: The 2006-2007 budget initially totalled CHF 690,588 (USD 617,699 or EUR 418,538). The revised two-year appeal target was CHF 394,620 (USD 352,970 or EUR 239,164), out of which 76 per cent was covered. Click here to go to the attached financial reports: [Report 2006](#); [Report 2007](#); and [Report 2006-2007](#).

No. of people we help: This appeal sought to support the National Societies in their advocacy and programme work. The 52 National Societies of Europe and central Asia have benefited from the activities conducted under this appeal as their capacities to carry out programme activities have been strengthened.

Our partners: A total of 26 community-based, national, government-based, international organizations, United Nations agencies, developmental agencies and partners within the Movement. The main donors of the programme were the Swedish, German, British, and Austrian Red Cross Societies, and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID).

Current context

Recent floods, heat waves and droughts are seen by many as an indication of the ever-increasing impact of natural disasters in the region due to climate change. Other common disaster risks in the region include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mine explosions and other technological accidents. This underlines the need for both effective disaster response mechanisms as well as more emphasis on risk reduction measures and adaptation.

Meanwhile, in the area of public health the growing incidence of HIV and AIDS, and especially Tuberculosis (TB), are reasons for concern across the entire region. Some parts of the region still face urgent needs in ensuring essential health services such as basic access to mother and child health care, clean drinking water and adequate sanitation. Elsewhere, the provision of adequate care and support for a growing elderly population, the need to address lifestyle diseases such as obesity and diabetes, and health emergencies such as avian and pandemic influenza will require increased attention.

The highly complex and multi-faceted issue of migration is likely to stay the focus of much public attention and debate across the entire region, ranging from the need to better manage labour mobility and adapt public service provision to demographic trends to the challenges posed by irregular migration, and the need to combat more effectively the scourge of human trafficking.

Finally, in communities facing globalisation, rapid cultural change, economic uncertainty, and shifting demographic make-up, it will be crucial to actively foster strong social cohesion to ensure continued growth, security and prosperity.

Taken together, there is a clear need to scale up work in the areas of health and care – particularly HIV and AIDS, TB and harm reduction – and migration, including stronger advocacy on behalf of all vulnerable migrants regardless of their legal status. Activities carried out under this Voicing Hidden Vulnerabilities programme therefore sought to better align the International Federation's voice, presence and action in influential national, regional and international fora in order to make a positive difference to people's lives.

The activities under this programme were not only shaped by the general context of Europe and central

Asia, but have also been particularly influenced by the 'Federation of the Future' process within the International Federation. While discussions in regards to the structure of regional departments were ongoing, the Europe Department already started to work in a different way in terms of its governance/management support to the National Societies across Europe and central Asia. This new working modality became part of this appeal and is reflected in this bi-annual report.

Progress towards objectives

Objective 1: Increased influence on humanitarian policy and decision-makers at the international, regional and national level through a coherent and strategic approach in advocacy and communications.

Achievements:

The adoption of the *Istanbul Commitments* during the recent European Conference (see under objective 2 for more details) has enabled National Societies and the International Federation's secretariat to advocate more effectively on key issues such as migration and access to health and care. Several National Societies used the *Istanbul Commitments* to advocate with their own governments for better access to migrants irrespective of their legal status. At the regional level the Federation participated in several high-level events, including ministerial conferences on Tuberculosis, and on health and migration.

The global *advocacy and communications strategy* of the International Federation was approved by the Governing Board in late October 2006 after many months of discussions, and has been used to some extent to inform regional work in this area. A more detailed advocacy and communications strategy for Europe will be developed in the next period, once new technical positions have been filled at the Europe Zone level.

National Societies in the region are increasingly requesting advice and guidance on policy and advocacy matters. In an environment of increased complexity, tension and polarisation, many of the National Societies want to position themselves towards the European Union (EU) concerning policies on migration, health and care, as well as civil protection. In this regard, support has been provided by the secretariat to the EU office in formulating positions on a wide range of topics related to the four Global Agenda goals of the Federation.

Linked to the policy and advocacy support is the support to *regional networks* in Europe. Currently, 11 networks and three reference centres exist in Europe and central Asia with increasing interest to participate in the activities of the International Federation at the global level. A meeting of all chairpersons of European networks and directors of reference centres based in Europe was organized on 25-26 September 2006 in Geneva. Discussions focused mainly on the inclusion of networks and reference centres in the policy-making of the International Federation. The Europe Department therefore responded to the growing demand and request of networks and reference centres to be accepted as knowledgeable partners and as centres of expertise.

The '*European Stop TB Partnership*' is hosted by the International Federation as part of the global partnership. It started its work with a new full time person on board located in the health and care department. The partnership still remains within the Europe region; however, the responsibility of the implementation has now been transferred fully to the health and care department. It is envisaged that the hosted project will be handed over as agreed to another partner during the course of 2008.

In order to stimulate discussion and exchange of experience among the National Societies in Europe and central Asia, and to position the International Federation, the Europe-wide *Bridge* magazine has been published twice. Each issue of *the Bridge* focuses on one particular theme and provides a pan-European perspective on it. Many National Societies, as a practise, are regularly submitting the

magazine to their governments to provide an overview of the activities within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, therefore it has become an important communication and advocacy tool. *The Bridge* is published both in English and Russian in order to serve the wider region of Europe and central Asia.

The spring 2006 issue focused on humanitarian values and migration, while the winter 2006-7 edition thematically focused on disaster preparedness and disaster response, covering also "non-traditional" disasters, such as climate change, poverty-induced disasters and migration flows.

Challenges or Constraints:

While the high quality and clear advocacy value of *the Bridge* have been recognized by the National Societies and other actors across Europe unfortunately the limited funding available for its production has meant only two issues could be completed. Nevertheless, efforts are being undertaken to secure further funding in order to continue with the publication of *the Bridge*, while alternative options for its format, frequency and distribution will also be explored.

Objective 2: Support the Turkish Red Crescent Society, in organizing the VII European Regional Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The VII European Conference was originally scheduled to be held in Moscow in 2006. However, due to organizational constraints, the Governing Board took the decision to postpone and switch the venue of the conference to Istanbul. The conference was successfully hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent on 20-24 May 2007, and focused on two main themes:

- health and care (with a special focus on HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis)
- migration (with a focus on protection, assistance and durable solutions for irregular migrants)

It was attended by 49 out of the 52 European National Societies, representatives from several other non-European National Societies, the International Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Standing Commission. A large number of external partners ranging from UN Agencies and the European Council to international NGOs and partner organizations were also present.

The conference concluded with the adoption of the *Istanbul Commitments* which will guide the work of European National Societies in the coming years. They committed to scaling up their actions to address increasing and changing needs in health and care services caused by ageing population, migration, socio-economic crises, HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis. Strong focus was given on fighting stigmatization, and on involving marginalized people, youth and volunteers in the design and implementation of programmes.

In the field of migration National Societies decided to make the delivery of humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants and to victims of human trafficking a priority. They also undertake to advocate for unconditional access to migrants regardless of their status as well as for the regularization of the status of all migrants whose status has remained undetermined for a long period of time.

The conference was truly a cross-regional event, with all sub-regions well represented on the planning committee and working groups, which combined well with the International Federation's secretariat to interact with the Turkish Red Crescent on all aspects of the conference. Significantly too, 14 attending National Societies contributed financially to the Solidarity Fund, which was established to provide financial support for those National Societies which otherwise would not have been able to attend. Additional financial support was received from the Swedish and Finnish Red Cross Societies for the conference staff-on-loan position.

A full conference report covering the main speeches and including summaries of all plenary, working group and breakout sessions, has been prepared by the Turkish Red Crescent Society and is available.

For practical purposes it was decided that the conference will, instead of being part of this appeal, be directly under the International Federation's Europe Department and accordingly a report of the conference was produced, including the Istanbul Commitments.

Objective 3: National Societies are supported in clarifying the role of governance and management.

This objective was introduced to the appeal at a later stage, with the aim of aligning the Europe Department to the discussions of the Federation of the Future process and to its New Operating Model. Clarification of the role of governance and management, for the purpose of ensuring accountability, is considered as one of the most important criteria for a well-functioning National Society. Therefore the International Federation's secretariat has a responsibility to provide support to the National Societies engaged in such a change process. In order to implement this objective, the Europe Department hired a consultant with strong expertise in the field of National Societies' statutory matters and fluent in Russian language, a definite advantage when dealing with National Societies from the ex-Soviet Union. His contract was first established for one year, and then extended until mid-September 2007. Since then instead of having a permanent contract, fixed contracts per missions were signed with him.

During 2006, the consultant provided various types of consultancy support, such as on the revision and implementation of statutes, clarification of governance and management functions, optimization of the organizational structures, elaboration of the improved management procedures and standards. The work was done in close cooperation with the International Federation's representations in the region, with the secretariat's Governance Support Unit, as well as with ICRC and other partner National Societies interested in this activity, particularly the Swedish, the Swiss, the Austrian and the German Red Cross Societies, who also contributed financially.

Major progress has been seen in central Asia where most societies have finalized their statutes revision and are working on the implementation of the new statutes. During the course of 2006 and 2007 the National Societies of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan benefited from several consultancy missions, whereas Kazakhstan received consultancy support by e-mail. Also the National Societies were in direct contact with the consultant in between the missions, through communication means. The consultations covered the following areas:

- Kyrgyzstan - implementation of the new statutes, branch development concept, managerial issues; improvement of the headquarters' structure, new approaches of the National Society strategic planning, development of the Red Crescent Society's annual country appeal for 2008-2009
- Turkmenistan - finalization of the statutory revision process, with the final edition taking consideration of the ICRC-International Federation Joint Commission's comments, preparation of the National Society Congress; support in the development of the statutes implementation plan in 2007 and development of a project proposal aiming at the statutes implementation, which proposal has been selected and will be funded throughout 2008
- Tajikistan - support in managing integrity issues within change process, and development of the plan of action for the preparation of upcoming elections envisaged by the newly adopted statutes
- Kazakhstan – provision of legal expertise on the revised statutes, verification of the Russian and English version of the statutory text, edition of the English version for submission to the ICRC-International Federation Joint Commission
- Uzbekistan - support in the development of the statutes implementation plan, verification and edition of the statutory texts in Russian and English from the legal point of view

In November 2007 the Uzbekistan Red Crescent requested another mission to discuss the concerns related to the implementation of the statutes. These included the clarification of governance and management functions, legal status of the branches, financial management related issues, human resource policy related issues, project management knowledge and skills as well as branch capacity building and development.

The missions included meetings with governing board members and different level leadership of the societies, PNS representatives, ICRC, and government authorities. Reports on missions are translated into Russian and shared with the National Societies and other involved parties.

Further support was provided to the Georgia Red Cross related to its reform process. The Russian Red Cross received assistance in analysis and comments on the final draft of its statutes. At the end of 2006, the Belarus Red Cross engaged in a process of revising its legal base, the statutes, strategic planning, and the improvement of the National Society headquarters' organizational structure. The consultant's support to the Belarus Red Cross consisted of visits and phone/ e-mail contact. His programme has been established in cooperation with the Belarus Red Cross and a consortium of National Societies (the Austrian, the German and the Swiss Red Cross Societies) operating in Belarus. The Belarus Red Cross received support in its statutes revision and the elaboration of a new strategic plan for 2008-2011. The consultancy missions were combined with organizational development workshops on governance and management, human resources management, project and strategic planning, financial management and resource mobilization initiated and organized by the consortium for 30 senior National Society leadership and management staff. Youth and volunteer policies were developed and adopted by the Presidium of the Belarus Red Cross.

The leadership of the Belarus Red Cross have now a much clearer idea of the financial management and in 2008 is ready to proceed with practical steps in the revision of the National Society's financial management system. It is also expected that in 2008 the National Society's Congress will adopt the new strategic plan, the revised statutes, and will probably elect relevant governance thus confirming the initiated change process.

In building the Belarus Red Cross's human resource capacity, strategic planning and legal base development, the International Federation works closely with the Consortium and the Danish Red Cross to ensure synergy and complementarity with the ongoing organizational development process under their *Visiting Nurses* and *Youth Participation* programmes. The Swiss Red Cross also provided financial support for the consultant's in-country costs. In between the missions of the consultant the partners jointly followed up and supported the process through an open dialogue with the Belarus Red Cross's leadership and relevant staff.

The Belarus Red Cross has started the change initiatives, however, the process, much related to changing perceptions and mindsets, does not progress easily in all areas, some of them, mainly management and decision-making require more intensive support. Nevertheless, with the International Federation's and other partners' engagement, the National Society has gone a long way to improve its structure, and the quality and impact of its programmes, and in 2008 the Belarus Red Cross will convene an extraordinary Congress to confirm the initiated change process and introduce new approaches towards the National Society's legal base, governance and management structures, strategic planning and policy-making principles.

The support provided by the consultant to the National Societies has been unanimously considered of great value, and it is envisaged that tailored organizational development support will continue to be provided during 2008 and beyond. In the coming period such activities will be included as part of the regional and country level programmes and plans wherever possible, in order to optimize planning and reporting.

Working in partnership

The *European Stop TB Partnership* initiative provides an important regional platform for key agencies to work together more effectively on TB, and during the coming years this should be emulated at national level in high-burden countries.

All activities of the governance and management consultant are the results of a strong cooperation and

dialogue with the National Societies requesting support, with partner National Societies having a strong interest in the activity, namely the Swedish, the Swiss, the German and the Austrian Red Cross Societies, and with ICRC.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The adoption and active follow-up of the *Istanbul Commitments* will guide the work of European National Societies over the coming years, and will enable more effective advocacy at both national and regional levels. Similarly, the ongoing governance and management support to selected National Societies willing to improve and strengthen their statutes, legal base, and organizational structure is an essential part of the International Federation's membership services aimed at strengthening their capacity to deliver on Strategy 2010 and the Global Agenda.

Looking ahead

The many hidden vulnerabilities throughout the Europe region will continue to require an effective voice in order to draw public attention, to advocate for better public policies, and to scale up support for effective programmes in key areas such as TB and HIV, social care for the elderly or migration. A comprehensive advocacy and communication strategy for Europe will be developed during the coming year. Meanwhile, all activities under the current programme will be incorporated into the ongoing regular programmes at zone, regional and country level, rather than continuation as a stand-alone programme.

The progress and successes experienced in the field of support to the National Societies' governance and management functions are encouraging, and further programming will continue during the next year. Activities will be managed from the regional level in most cases to facilitate closer follow-up, better reporting and stronger linkage with other programmes.

Finally, the Europe Zone office will play a key role in supporting the monitoring and evaluation of the Istanbul Commitments, as well as the preparation of the next European Conference to be held in 2010.

How we work	
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) in delivering quality and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at http://www.ifrc.org	
The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".	Global Agenda Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
For further information on this Appeal, contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Europe Zone office: Leon Prop, Deputy Head of Zone, Budapest tel: + 36 1 248 3300; fax: + 36 1 248 3322; email: leon.prop@ifrc.org 	