

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## CENTRAL EUROPE: FLOODS

*Information Bulletin*  
no. 02/2006  
15 April 2006

*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 183 countries.*

### In Brief

**This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.**

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

#### Global Agenda Goals:

- 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.

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*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

### The Situation

Over the past twenty days, the region of Central Europe has been hit by seasonal flooding- a result of rapid rises in temperature, melting winter snows and heavy rainfall.

### **Poland**

In Poland flooding has affected mainly farmland- agricultural and grazing land. There were no reports of evacuation of people from houses in the affected areas.

### **Czech Republic**

In the Czech Republic the gradual melting of snow, together with heavy rainfall and high winds, has swollen streams and rivers. Damage assessments are on going. Several hundred people were evacuated from their homes in risky or affected areas. There are reports of hundreds of damaged houses, most of the damage has been to household equipment.

The Czech government has earmarked CHF 21.8 million to help those affected by the floods. The government has also adopted a notice concerning social benefits for vulnerable people affected by the flood.

### **Slovakia**

Heavy rains and melting snow in Slovakia have also led to flooding over the past three weeks. Although the situation has not been as dramatic as in neighbouring Czech Republic, areas in the east and west of the country have been affected. The levels of water in the affected areas and rivers are now decreasing.

### **Hungary**

In the capital Budapest, a state of emergency was declared on Monday 3 April. The river Danube had risen more than ten centimetres overnight and crested at 861centimetres. The river level has exceeded the level reached in 2002 during the major floods. Flood alerts are also in place along 3,800 kilometres representing three-quarters of all Hungary's waterways, and the highest, third-degree alert has been ordered along 1,012 kilometres, including the Danube section at Budapest. Many of Hungary's rivers crested on 4 April but are expected to remain at high levels for a longer period.

There could be more floods caused by the river Tisa.

### **Bulgaria**

During the period 10-13 April, the water level of Danube River has been rising to critical level in the north-west part of Bulgaria. Since 12 April, the Bulgarian Red Cross Crisis Management Team at the National HQ, activated the response system and is monitoring the situation. At the moment the situation is most critical in Vidin region, where a state of emergency was proclaimed.

The water level on 13 April was 939 cm and the prognosis says that it will continue to rise. According to the Regional Plan for Disaster Accident and Catastrophes (floods section) when the water level reaches 950 cm there is a plan for evacuation of the population. The Bulgarian RC in Vidin is part of the National response system at Regional/ Municipal Level.

The Mayor of Vidin has ordered the patients in the town's hospital and maternity hospital to be prepared for evacuation. According to the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters, the water level of the Danube River at the town of Vidin will reach 990 cm by Wednesday, 19 April. By order of the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic notes were urgently sent to the Governments of Romania and Serbia and Montenegro, asking for cooperation and measures to be taken to restrict discharge of water from the Zhelezni Vrata dam in the following days and to supply enough information on the amount of water expected to be discharged. Also, meetings were held with the Ambassadors of the two countries in the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to the problem.

### **Croatia**

Based on expectations and experiences from other European countries affected by flooding, Croatian Directorate for Protection and Rescue together with the State organization for water management in the beginning of April started to prepare all organizations and institutions for adequate response, with the highest water level expected to come on 7 April.

Crises management HQ was formed in the area, in charge of monitoring development of the situation and responding to threats and needs of communities.

On 7 April the highest level of alert was declared and special forces were sent to the most risky areas. More than 1,000 persons were involved in different activities to prevent flooding of inhabited areas. As a result of these activities more than 1.5 km of dikes were built, using around 111,000 sand bags.

All the activities to prevent flooding of inhabited areas were successful and only part of one village in Vukovar area was flooded and a small area with weekend houses near Osijek. People in Budzak (Vukovar area) refused evacuation and decided to remain in their homes even when basement and ground floors became flooded. The same situation happened in village Karasica near Osijek, where 50 people refused to leave their houses. Situation is calming now and it seems that the high water levels will end without serious consequences.

### **Serbia and Montenegro**

Due to the heavy rain, flooding and uncontrolled deforestation in the last several years, landslides occurred on the territory of several municipalities in Serbia in the last few weeks. At the moment, 19 municipalities all over Serbia plus two municipalities in Belgrade are affected to different extent by floods and landslides.

The most serious situation is still in the village of Bogdanje in the municipality of Trstenik. Around 130 houses are damaged, with more than 200 citizens already evacuated and temporarily accommodated with relatives, mostly in the city of Trstenik. The representatives of the Government of Serbia visited the region and the Prime Minister promised that all families whose houses were affected by these landslides would get the new houses. The building of the first 20 houses started on Monday, 27 March. The government prepared approximately CHF 350,000 for assistance in counter-floods measures.

So far, a state of emergency has been proclaimed in five municipalities: Loznica, Beocin, Zabalj, Titel and Zrenjanin. The problem with underground waters is high in Banat and Vovodina. The most vulnerable is Secanj municipality. Some 1,082 houses in five villages are in danger and prepared for evacuation. The flooding in other municipalities is mostly to agricultural soil definitely affecting the crops.

Since the beginning of April the water level of several rivers in Serbia has been on the constant rise. On 13 April, the water in the river Danube reached the highest level ever recorder: 760 cm. This means that the northern parts of Serbia, in Vojvodina region are now endangered. The most serious situation is in municipalities of Beocin and Slankamen where up to 100 families have been evacuated so far, with water flooding some of the fields, some houses and, notably, the hospital in Slankamen. The situation is also critical in the village Mosorin, in the municipality of Titel where the river Tisa is threatening 3,800 inhabitants. The second ring of defence system has just been established and the evacuation initiated, starting with cattle. In the municipality of Zrenjanin at least two villages are also in danger.

In Belgrade, the capital, the municipality of Cukarica has suffered flooding from the river Sava. About 1,000 people are ready to be evacuated and accommodated in temporary shelters (five schools). The evacuation from the most critical spot (Ada Ciganlija) started in the night between 13 and 14 April. At the same time the municipality of Zemun was also affected by floods caused by the river Danube. Thirty families were evacuated and are residing in private accommodation.

The Danube is also endangering municipalities downstream from Belgrade. In Smederevo, Veliko Gradiste and Pozarevac there is 24 hour work on reinforcing the existing dike system. Three hundred seventy houses in the municipality of Pozarevac and two hundred houses in the municipality of Smederevo have been flooded and thirty families have been evacuated, now residing in private accommodation. An additional 19 people have been evacuated and accommodated in the Red Cross Home in Mala Krsna.

The area in northern Banat that suffered heavy floods in 2005 is again potentially endangered with the level of the river Tamis rising and the flood wave expecting to arrive from Romania on 15 and 16 April. The predictions are that last year's water level of 884 mm could be reached and even surpassed.

## Romania

Following the heavy rains, in the middle of March, four counties in the western and southwestern parts of Romania were affected: Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinti and Olt. At the same time, the eastern and northeastern parts were severely affected by snow storms. The most seriously affected county was Mehedinti. Destruction was continuing in some villages, as a result of land slides. The Inspectorates for Management of Emergency Situations managed to evacuate 150 people from the flooded areas in Mehedinti, despite initial reluctance from the inhabitants who were afraid of looting in their absence. Evacuated people were accommodated in schools in neighbouring localities. Sand bags have been positioned to reinforce the affected embankment of the river Drincea, in the village of Punghina.

The Danube river is flowing at 15,500 cubic meters per second what caused severe flooding in Romania on 13 April. According to the latest report from the General Inspectorate for Management of Emergency Situations, the situation per county is as follows:

County	Evacuated people	Houses affected	Households affected	Agricultural land flooded	Bridges & footbridges	Wells
Caras Severin	396	263	1266	2266 ha	75	478
Mehedinti	5	11	154	2430 ha	23	234
Dolj	46	37	147	8325 ha	29	89
Teleorman				749 ha		
Constanta		2	6			
Tulcea	35	77	467	4810 ha	2	

The Inspectorate for Management of Emergency Situations managed to evacuate 396 people from the flooded areas in Caras Severin and 46 in Dolj. They hosted the evacuated people in schools and with their relatives in neighbouring localities. Also, the low portions of affected Danube embankment were reinforced with sand bags and small engineering works. Local branches of Inspectorate for Management of Emergency Situations are doing regular monitoring of embankments, access roads and electricity supply system. All technical intervention means belonging to private companies are mobilized.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Polish Red Cross

The Polish Red Cross distributed dryers to the villages in Lublin County that were hit by flash floods.

### Czech Red Cross

The main crisis committee (MCC) of the Czech Red Cross was convened on 29 March at the beginning of the emergency. The committee has been communicating with the crisis staff at branch level, regarding the capacity for action of the crisis units at a branch level. The assessment showed needs for dryers so the Czech Red Cross focused its response on this, making 400 dryers available for distribution. The Czech Red Cross has launched a national appeal for financial support for the victims of the flood – seeking support in kind to provide more dryers to affected families, and also for funds for post flooding replacement of damaged house equipment. The Spanish Red Cross contributed EURO 12,000 to the Czech RC for the purchase of dryers and disinfectants.

### Slovak Red Cross

The Slovak Red Cross has been active from the beginning of the crisis through its local branches, which have been distributing emergency relief items and equipment via two Red Cross warehouses. On 31 March a national appeal for funds was launched by the Slovak Red Cross. In the towns of Senici and Komarno, water pumps, drying machines, disinfectants and clothes have been distributed to affected populations.

### Hungarian Red Cross

On 6 April the Hungarian Prime Minister spoke with five key aid organizations and state emergency managers at an emergency coordination meeting hosted by the Hungarian Red Cross headquarters in Budapest. The organizations discussed coordination mechanisms during the current flood operation. A national appeal for contributions to the flood operation was launched on 6 and 7 April through six national and 20 regional

newspapers. The Hungarian Red Cross has also issued its own national appeal for funds. The local Red Cross branches in affected areas are supporting with the distribution of mattresses and covers and other relief items. Needs assessments are ongoing. The Hungarian Red Cross has received offers of support from the Ukrainian Red Cross, German Red Cross and Turkish Red Crescent.

### **Bulgarian Red Cross**

The National crisis response Team has been activated and immediate contact with all Regional branches on Danube River was established. There are seven branches which are on the Danube River: Vidin; Vratza; Montana; Pleven; Veliko Tarnovo; Rousse and Silistra. The monitoring process is ongoing.

The representative of Bulgarian Red Cross DP department visited Vidin region on 12 April and together with the local RC had meeting with the local authorities – Major of Vidin, State Agency for Civil Protection local structures and other partners.

Bulgarian RC mobilized resources from its Disaster stock reserves and sent one truck with basic relief items: blankets, rubber boots, food parcels to Vidin region on 13 April. Bulgarian RC is maintaining constant contact with State Agency for Civil protection at national level and through the regional branches with the local state authorities. All changes to the situation are reported to the Bulgarian RC's NHQ. Exchange of information is also established with the National Situation Crisis Center of the Government of Republic of Bulgaria. If the situation changes rapidly, Bulgarian RC is ready to support the affected branches with relief items from its own DP reserves at the Central Warehouse and interregional warehouses situated in Rousse region.

### **Croatian Red Cross**

Local Red Cross branches in Vukovar and Osijek have been part of Crises Management HQ and they participated in all activities and in the decision-making process. In both local branches RC volunteers and staff was ready to support possible evacuations and accommodation of affected population in public buildings (schools, sport halls). The branch in Vukovar organized distribution of clean water, food items and blankets to population in village of Budzak. From Croatian RC Central Warehouse 40 humidity dryers will be sent to affected area to speed up normalization of life conditions of affected population.

It is expected that above normal water level will last for few more days (up to one week) and after the decrease Croatian RC will assess the situation again regarding additional needs of affected population for items like disinfectants.

### **Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society**

The National Society is actively monitoring the situation. The Red Cross participates in the work of the municipal crisis headquarters in all affected areas. The municipal and republic teams of the Red Cross have assessed the needs and some assistance has already been delivered (more detailed information could be seen on [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?rpts06/SerbiaFloodsIB2.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?rpts06/SerbiaFloodsIB2.pdf)).

On 12 and 13 April the assessment team from the Red Cross of Serbia together with the Federation Disaster Management officer visited several of the affected municipalities and had a series of meetings with local Red Cross branch secretaries and people from the local crisis headquarters. The subject of the meetings was the evacuation plans in case of disaster and possible Red Cross assistance to the vulnerable people. As a result of the meeting the Red Cross of Serbia headquarters has done the pre-positioning of relief items in some of the visited municipalities. So far 1,000 hygiene parcels and 600 rubber boots have been delivered to the Novi Sad regional warehouse, ready for distribution to villages in Titel and Zrenjanin municipalities.

Disaster response unit of Novi Sad branch assisted with the reinforcement of dike system at critical points around the city. In Pozarevac, the Red Cross branch is preparing one hot meal per day for evacuated 100 people. In Belgrade, Disaster response units of two branches: Cukarica and Palilula (40 volunteers in total) are active in facilitating shelters for the evacuated people from Ada Ciganlija.

The assessment of the Red Cross of Serbia gives the potential figure of 7,165 families in total, affected by both landslides and floods in 30 municipalities. Following the request for assistance from the Red Cross of Serbia and Montenegro, the first DREF of CHF 128,000 has been released. So far, 1,300 rubber boots and 1,200 hygiene

parcels has been procured. Tender for 1,200 food parcels, 500 baby parcels, 7,000 litres of disinfectant, 300 adult diapers, ten collective centres' hygiene sets, 100 blankets and 800 mattresses is currently underway with the goods to arrive in the next several days.

### **Romanian Red Cross**

All Red Cross Branches in the affected area started to evaluate the situation in the field from the beginning of the emergency situation. Based on their assessments and requirements, the headquarters of the Romanian Red Cross ordered distributions from the Regional Warehouse Alba as follows:

Red Cross Branches	Blankets	Sleeping bags	Bed-linen sets	Children shoes	Plastic mugs	Plastics pots	Women trousers	Food parcels	Diapers
Mehedinti	100	100	100						
Caras Severin	200		150	100	200	300	50	50	100

Red Cross Mehedinti volunteers distributed relief items to evacuated people. Relief items for those evacuated in Caras Severin will also be distributed. Tulcea RC County used their emergency funds to purchase water and basic foods and distributed them to flood affected people. Further humanitarian relief assistance will be provided according to Romanian Red Cross branch requests, based on continuous need evaluation they are carrying out.

The Romanian Red Cross is also finalizing the post flood recovery operation following the widespread flooding in 2005. This operation is due to end in May 2006, and is supported by Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) members, who have been working with their colleagues in Bucharest since summer 2005.

Romanian Red Cross HQ is permanently in touch with Ministry of Environment and General Inspectorate for Management of Emergency Situations and Ministry of Environment regarding further developments in the field.

### **Regional Delegation**

The Regional Delegation, through its regional disaster management coordinator, is monitoring the situation closely. Regional delegation Budapest has required from the National Societies of the region information on their emergency stocks in order to make regional disaster response activities more efficient in case that situation with floods in the region deteriorates.

Further information bulletins or DREF bulletins will be launched in the coming weeks.

[\*Click here to return to the title page or contact information.\*](#)