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#02

Europe Zone

A newsletter of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



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Italian Red Cross volunteers wait for Tunisian migrants to land on the tiny island of Lampedusa/ Tommaso Della Longa, Italian Red Cross

The drama of the escape

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 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Editorial

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Dear friends,

As you know, the last month has been characterised by a series of particularly dramatic events. Though in different ways, the ongoing migration flow in the Mediterranean basin, as well as the earthquake and tsunami that recently struck Japan have all resulted in severe humanitarian consequences for the affected populations, and forced thousands of people to leave their homes with small to no chance to know whether or when they will be able to return.

As we speak, the civil strife and unrest experienced by several countries in the Middle East and North Africa region - which has provoked significant population movements and concerns related to security, safety, protection, and threats to livelihoods - is escalating to an extremely serious point that only a few weeks ago it was not possible to foresee.

As you have learnt from the MENA Zone Office's communications, from ICRC, and from the media, the situation in Libya is indeed continuing to cause suffering that requires humanitarian response - within Libya, in Tunisia and Egypt, and in other parts of the world. On the other hand, the events in Tunisia have precipitated a significant flow of people to Italy, and there are indications that the events in Libya have the potential to produce similar effects in Malta and elsewhere.

What we are witnessing in North Africa and the Middle East represents a major change in the political climate of that region, a phenomenon that will be driving events for a considerable period of time, and has the potential to produce major consequences for European countries.

Less than two weeks ago, another highly dramatic event occurred in Japan. Shaken by its worst disaster in recent memory, the country is now battling to restore the basics of life for a shocked and vulnerable population, including hundreds of thousands crowded into evacuation centres, and slowly get back on its feet despite daunting obstacles.

It is in moments like this, when we witness the drama of the escape, a sudden, forced and painful escape from one's home or motherland, that we must realise how essential the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent can and must be to reduce the suffering of those who are in a condition of increased vulnerability.

It is in moments like this that we realise how working together as a Federation can make a real difference not just in our capacity to respond to existing crises, but also to minimize the humanitarian impact of future ones.

Anitta Underlin
Europe Zone, Director

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Responding to emergencies

As a consequence of the ongoing political turmoil in North Africa, thousands of migrants have fled Libya, Tunisia and also Egypt for neighbouring countries and the European side of the Mediterranean Basin. The current critical situation in Libya has further led to thousands of people crossing the borders to Tunisia and Egypt, and may also lead to increasing population movement across the Mediterranean, principally towards Malta and Italy.

Italian Red Cross assists North African migrants

Since the very first hours, the Italian Red Cross has been providing health and shelter support to the thousands of Tunisian migrants who in the last month have fled to the Italian island of Lampedusa and the southern regions of Calabria and Sicily.

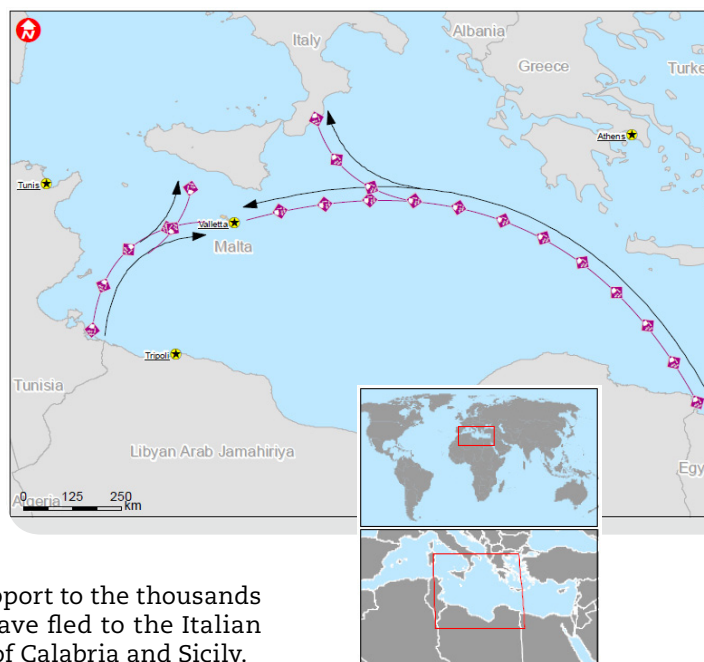
A DM specialist from the Europe Zone Office was deployed for liaison purposes to the Italian Red Cross in the past weeks. The National Society has also been supported by the ICRC in terms of RFL and is working closely with the authorities through a co-ordination mechanism in which also UNHCR and IOM participates.

In the last days, a reception centre with a capacity of over 400 households was opened near Catania, Sicily, where the first 200 migrants have been received. With the support of some 80 operators, the Italian Red Cross will be providing shelter, food, health assistance to the migrants.

Malta: contingency planning and preparedness

CHF 83,603 has been allocated from the DREF to support the Malta Red Cross in preparedness activities based on a contingency plan to provide assistance to some 1,000 beneficiaries. In close co-operation with European national societies, support for the Malta Red Cross is also being obtained in the form of relief goods being forwarded for preparedness purposes. Additional support has been provided through deploying specialised personnel for short missions: experts in relief (from the IFRC's office in Belgrade), logistics (Swiss RC) and communications/media (German RC).

Other European National Societies have contributed human resources, as well as cash and in-kind donations to the humanitarian operations in the affected countries.



News stories on the MENA crisis

[All eyes on the sea: A diary from Lampedusa \(10/03\)](#)

[Tunisia: volunteers help children be children \(07/03\)](#)

[Tunisia: Helping the world's most vulnerable start a new chapter \(04/03\)](#)

[Volunteers are the heroes of the Libyan Red Crescent \(04/03\)](#)

[Tunisia–Libyan border: Another cold night in Ras Jdir \(04/03\)](#)

[Serving the principle of impartiality on the Tunisian–Libyan border \(03/03\)](#)

[Libyan–Tunisian border: Red Cross Red Crescent pushes on through the chaos \(02/03\)](#)

[Tunisian Red Crescent stretcher teams at the Libya border \(28/02\)](#)

[Alarming humanitarian situation at Tunisia's border with Libya \(28/02\)](#)

[Tears of joy on the Tunisian border \(25/02\)](#)

[Italian Red Cross takes care of North African migrants \(23/02\)](#)

Past and future events

For more information on the forum, visit the [blog](#) of the Tajikistan Red Crescent Society.

Dushanbe hosts the biggest CA RCS annual event



Presidents and secretaries general of the Red Crescent Societies of Central Asia, together with IFRC Secretary General, Director of Europe Zone, and ICRC regional delegates attended the Annual Central Asian National Societies' Leadership Forum in Dushanbe, 1-3 March 2011.

“Demographic challenges, migration, climate change, and globalization affect our people and communities with major consequences for our work. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies should adapt to these changes in order to do better by increasing its capacity to provide humanitarian services to vulnerable communities and people in need.”

These words were the key message of the IFRC Secretary General during his visit to Dushanbe, on the occasion of the Annual Central Asian National Societies' Leadership Forum, held between 1 and 3 March 2011. The Forum brought together presidents and secretaries general of the Red Crescent Societies of the region. Hosted by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, the event was also attended by the International Federation's Secretary General, Director of Europe Zone, and ICRC

regional delegates.

The participants of the Forum discussed and defined regional priorities, strategies and plans of action, in the framework of the the adoption of Strategy 2020 and the commitments made in Nairobi in November 2009.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting with President Emomali Rahmon, Mr. Bekele Geleta noted that IFRC attached significance to cooperation with Tajikistan's Red Crescent Society and considered its activity more efficient among similar organizations operating in the region.

“I want to share with you that both the Secretary General and myself were highly impressed by the work by the Tajikistan Red Crescent, the staff, the members, the chairpersons and not at least the engaging and charming young volunteers, who met us upon arrival and stayed with us until our departure. We could not have asked for better arrangement and warmer hospitality” noted Anitta Underlin, the IFRC Europe Zone Director.

Bringing the issue of decent housing to the forefront

A major conference on shelter, the Housing Forum for Europe and Central Asia takes place in Budapest from April 4-6, with Habitat for Humanity, UNDP and the UN Economic Commission for Europe joining the International Federation as co-hosts.

The forum aims to bring together decision makers and stakeholders in the housing field to cooperate to build a sustainable and resilient future for all, and to bring the issue of decent housing to the forefront. With urbanization and population growing at an alarming pace, and

Past and future events

with the majority of the world's population now living in cities, the time is right for a wide-ranging debate on the impact of climate change, social and economic crises, migration, and other phenomena on human settlement.

“Support for such an initiative is in keeping with the Federation's commitment to the shelter sector, notes Graham Saunders, head of the Federation Settlements and Shelter Department. “We will also highlight our focus on addressing issues that impact on vulnerable groups in society, and our presence at national level as an auxiliary to Government.”

“One of the proposed themes for the 2011 International Conference is legislative advocacy on risk reduction and housing, land and property issues around crises, which will be key topics at the conference,” he adds. “ Our input to the structure of the conference has been to lead on the development on one of the four thematic tracks targeting the issue of vulnerabilities as they relate to housing, informed by the issues identified at the recent regional conference, including older people and the impact of the economic crisis.”

The Federation has wide and recent experience of shelter issues in Europe and Central Asia in contrasting contexts, including the aftermaths of the earthquakes in Italy and Serbia, population movement from Kyrgyzstan into Uzbekistan, dealing with the effects of cold waves in Tajikistan and running collective centres for African migrants in Spain or for most vulnerable urban families in Hungary.

The issues to be addressed at the Forum align with several priority topics of the Hungarian EU presidency: smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, housing and Roma populations, energy and climate issues, and issues around poverty and shelter.

“I started to believe in myself”

Red Cross helped Marekhi Gogidze, 38 internally displaced person from South Ossetia and mother of three children, start her own business

For the people displaced from South Ossetia after the armed conflict in 2008 there are very few possibilities to support themselves. Due to the economic crisis, over one third of working age people in Georgia don't have a job or other stable sources of income, and internally displaced people have even fewer chances if compared to locals, as the majority of them have no land to cultivate nor enough knowledge of the local job market. Women, especially mothers, face the biggest challenges. Everyday they have the dilemma of how to manage very limited family budget to provide their children with enough food, clothes and supplies for school.



Marekhi with one of her sons. Thanks to the support of the RC of Georgia, she's now running her own business.

Georgia in figures

- Population: 4.4 mil
- Number of IDPs: over 230,000, including 18,000 displaced in 2008
- IDP monthly allowance: EUR 11 per person
- Cost of bread 0,5 kg: EUR 0.5
- Cost of milk 1 lt: EUR 1
- EUR 13 is a cost of training of one IDP in proposal writing
- EUR 270 can help IDP to start her own business

News from National Societies

The first time that Marexi, mother of three (Levan, 14, Aleko, 7 and Luka, 5) met the Red Cross was in October 2008, when the Georgian Government provided her family with an apartment in Gardabani, southern Georgia.

“The Red Cross was among the first organisations that helped us. The Georgia Red Cross volunteers collected and provided us with food, hygiene items and warm clothes, they played with our children and did their best to help us feel at home in Gardabani” says Marexi “I was very impressed and thankful for this help and wanted to give something back. One day I went to the branch and asked if it was possible to join the Red Cross as a volunteer. From that day, I started to participate in the activities of the branch, which gave me the chance to take part in the writing of a project proposal that addressed the issue of the integration of minorities, and we got a small grant from the Red Cross that helped us implement such initiative. This first success encouraged me and I decided to try and start my own business.

The branch suggested that I should do something that, as the mother of three, I can do very well, like cooking, baking and sewing. So I used my knowledge on proposal writing and developed a business project. Now I have my own business – I’m baking cookies and cakes and I sell them to the local shops. That gives me an income of 200 Gel (EUR 84) per month, which is almost twice as much as my family receives from the Government as IDP allowance. Now I can make sure that my children will not be hungry and they will have the clothes and things that they need most.

Thanks to the Red Cross assistance I started to believe in myself - as result my family is doing well now and I regained hope for a good future for my children” tells Marexi with a beautiful smile.

Valentine’s Day: Belarus Red Cross volunteers help prevent HIV among your couples



Belarusian Red Cross volunteers promoting responsible behaviours among young couples in Minsk during Valentine’s Day.

They were as usually lively at the railway station in Minsk at noon. Volunteers in their red t-shirts and jackets were attracting the attention of those who were going on a journey, meeting or seeing off somebody. “Are you in a relationship? Would you like to make your sweetheart an original present?” – girls and boys in red asked the people. Then the volunteers offered couples to make a mutual pact to protect each other from HIV. The two were then bound up in symbolical red tapes and given love commitment certificates, together with Red Cross information materials on HIV.

“This is such an unusual present, I’m glad I got a chance to give it to my love as a keepsake” – one of the participants said. Both youth and adult couples, as well as those who were alone there, wrote their promises of love and faith for their boyfriends and girlfriends.

80% of 2010 HIV infection cases in Belarus were caused by sex. “That’s why we think that Valentine’s Day is a great opportunity to talk about love and devotion” comments Olga Kuzeeva, project manager “The action was taken to help young people realize that responsibility and faith give the guarantee of good relationships and health.

News from National Societies

Belarus Red Cross HIV prevention action was carried out for the third time on Valentine's Day and has become very popular. This year, some 5,000 people in six different cities took part in it.

Bulgarian Red Cross Youth launches new programme to support children and youngsters

The "Social Programme for Providing Services and Support to Children and Young People Leaving Social Care Institutions" has been launched by the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth in cooperation with the IFRC Europe Zone Office. The project, which is financially supported by Velux Foundation, started on 1 December, 2010 and will conclude on 30 November, 2014.

The project consists of two main components: on the one hand the realisation of a Foster Care Consultation Centre, which, by cooperating with other NGOs and institutions working in the field and actively involving Bulgarian Red Cross volunteers in its activities, may encourage the promotion of foster care in Bulgaria.

The second major part of the project consists of the establishment of a protected home for youngsters who are leaving different social institutions when they become of age. That is considered to be a key step towards their successful reintegration in society and the development of their social and professional skills. The capacity of the home is 12 people, each of whom is allowed to stay no longer than a year. Another goal is to deliver suitable training courses for the youth and provide them with the opportunity to access internship programmes. All youngsters who are living in the protected home will also be able to join the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth and work together with the volunteers of the National Society.



Bulgarian Red Cross volunteers and youngsters involved in one of the activities held in the protected house

Volunteers' faces: Dace Antone, Latvian Red Cross

The Red Cross branch in Jaunpils, some 90 km west of Latvia's capital Riga, was founded twelve years ago. Since the very beginning, Dace Antone has worked there as a volunteer. Her responsibility is the distribution of food parcels and clothes to needy people.

In Latvia, the Red Cross is one of the oldest non-governmental non-profit humanitarian organizations, having existed since the foundation of the country in 1918.

One of the largest activities nowadays is humanitarian aid, including distribution of food parcels to the needy people.

When asked how all the Red Cross work started in Jaunpils, Dace admits that the process was pushed by a strong initiative, but that no one had a clear vision of how the work should be organized. The idea of a Red Cross in Jaunpils was given by a Red Cross delegation from Sweden.

"Dace, you should do it. And I thought – why not?" remembers Dace Antone "I wrote an article for the local newspaper and we organized the

Resource mobilisation

first meeting. In the beginning there were only few of us, but eventually a Latvian Red Cross branch was created in Jaunpils.

“Twice a week needy people come to us to get some clothes and food parcels prepared in the framework of a programme of the European Commission. The work is not easy, but it feels good to help other people” adds Dace.

To watch the video, click [here](#).

Development Programmes 2011, Donor response

Europe & Central Asia

Code	Programme title	Budget	Funding	Coverage
MAA65001	Europe Zone	1,779,973	2,272,297	128%
MAAAL002	Albania	49,788	0	0%
MAABA002	Bosnia and Herzegovina	490,249	217,866	44%
MAAKV001	Kosovo	650,179	305,511	47%
MAAME001	Montenegro	26,732	348	1%
MAAMK002	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	34,852	0	0%
MAARO001	Romania	54,581	0	0%
MAARS001	Serbia	592,695	658,074	111%
MAA67002	CHARP	512,163	110,244	22%
MAABY002	Belarus	1,067,719	493,717	46%
MAAMD002	Moldova	488,239	70,621	14%
MAARU002	Russian Federation	4,001,006	1,634,792	41%
MAAUA002	Ukraine	200,898	21,029	10%
MAAAM002	Armenia	270,652	133,942	49%
MAAAZ002	Azerbaijan	409,638	130,089	32%
MAAGE002	Georgia	541,542	309,0518	57%
MAAKG001	Kyrgyzstan	1,199,862	451,743	38%
MAAKZ001	Kazakhstan	1,733,761	1,168,398	67%
MAATJ002	Tajikistan	1,547,008	717,900	46%
MAATM001	Turkmenistan	837,575	416,829	50%
MAAUZ001	Uzbekistan	928,250	446,962	48%
Subtotal Europe & Central Asia		17,417,361	9,559,880	55%

Staff changes

Over the past month, the Europe Zone team welcomed some new staff members:

Giovanni Zambello	Communications Delegate Focal point for 2011 European Year of Volunteering	Budapest
Flavio Ronzi	Organisational Development and Youth Delegate	Budapest

Assistance to people affected by earthquake/tsunami in Japan

Some 40 Europe Zone NSs have so far taken action to raise funds in support the work of the Japanese Red Cross in assisting the affected populations. Initiative range from appeals, online donation facilities, bank or postal transfers, SMS contributions, fundraising events, or in the provision of information on where to direct donations.

The Japanese Red Cross gratefully accepts expressions of solidarity from the National Societies and various donors who are willing to support its work. Such donations should be channelled directly to the National Society, which has set up a dedicated bank account, Details of the Japanese RC Bank a/c specifically set up for receiving solidarity funds are as following:

Account No: 8047705

For NSs and governments contributions. This money will be used for both the grant to the victims and the original activities of the Japanese RC. This account information is not open to general public.

Account No.: 8047670

For Individual, Corporate, and other donors, except for NSs and governments. This account information is open to everyone in their homepage.

Name of Bank: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Name of Branch: Ginza
SWIFT Code: SMBC JP JT
Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society
Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN



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