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60 years of Geneva Conventions

Of the three Red Cross Red Crescent anniversaries we celebrate this year, the 60th year of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 is shared with the 194 states that have acceded to them. Having agreed to the first Geneva Convention in 1864 – a direct result of Henry Dunant’s experiences at Solferino – nearly a century of additional experience went into drafting the four Conventions as we know them today.

In many ways the Geneva Conventions are associated with war and as such are the mandate of the ICRC. It is the same Conventions that we find as the basis of international humanitarian law for the existence of National Societies and their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities.



Beslan, North Ossetia. 2004/Photo Reuters

This role, clarified in national legislation, is one of the main sources of strength of the National Societies and their capacity to be effective, impartial and independent partners when addressing vulnerabilities and needs among their populations.

National Societies play an important role in disseminating International Humanitarian Law, among their volunteers and staff, to the general public and in conversations with partners in their governments.

At the Europe Zone Office, we are placing increasing emphasis on supporting National Societies who wish to develop their role as auxiliaries, adopt or “modernize” the Red Cross Red Crescent legislation in their countries or engage in a more productive dialogue with their governments.

In providing support of this nature, we work closely with the ICRC and draw upon their knowledge and experience.

During these days let me express my appreciation and admiration - something that we do too rarely - for the work the ICRC carries out under its mandates and the Geneva Conventions. Across the world the ICRC has worked hard for many years to protect and preserve human life, and to uphold human dignity. This is as close to a definition of the word “humanitarian” as one might come.

Anitta Underlin
Head of Europe Zone

Responding to emergencies



Economic Crisis Survey in Europe

In July, following the discussion at the Europe Zone Dialogue Platform meeting and in order to understand better the impact of the economic crisis, the Europe Zone Office initiated a process of interviewing the 52 National Societies about their perceptions of the crisis and its

impact on the vulnerable as well as on their organizations. With this evidence we aim to raise RCRC profile and positioning with regard to the economic crisis.

An approach paper to guide the work in relation to the survey was sent out to all National Societies. EZO staff members were tasked to contact the National Societies through telephone interviews.

Some National Societies preferred to respond in writing, but also were open to follow-up conversations. As of today, we have the results of interviews with 31 National Societies.

A preliminary analysis of the available material shows the following:

- Many societies have taken the economic crisis seriously from early times, worked with their branches, and formulated responses.
- There is no correlation between the wealth of a country and the seriousness with which they respond to the effects of the crisis. Very rich countries, measured by per capita income, report food as an important component of their action.
- There is considerable concern over what the future might bring, although in some countries there is an assumption that things will be OK, regardless.
- In one interview it was realised that while the *citizens* of the country might be weathering the economic storm reasonably well, irregular migrants were disproportionately affected.
- Groups identified as particularly vulnerable vary from the unemployed and their families to the elderly, single-headed households, large families and migrants.
- The main sources of vulnerability are unemployment followed by indebtedness at the household level, as well as deepening of existing vulnerabilities. This is, of course, not surprising, but it is useful to have it confirmed.
- At this stage one might conclude that the crisis deepens existing vulnerabilities and increases the numbers affected.
- With regard to the impact on national society finances, the picture is mixed: some claim there has been none, one or two feel their situation has improved, many report a fall in private donations, corporate donations and government support. In particular, a number of societies report loss of membership fees, and mounting difficulties in recruiting new members, income as a major problem.

Such are the preliminary findings in the process. The next step will be to complete interviews, develop an analytical paper based upon the maximum number of responses. Discuss findings and at a national level define possible action/s in dialogue with government and national actors, possibly internationally supported.

Those national societies who have not yet participated can make themselves available through Ms Veronika Farkas (veronika.farkas@ifrc.org) with copy to Mr Tore Svenning (tore.svenning@ifrc.org), in the Zone Office.

(Photo above by Hayari Karapetyan. Armenian Red Cross)

H1N1 in RCRC communications

According to WHO, in August 2009 over 42,000 cases of influenza A (H1N1) have been reported from 47 of the 53 states in the WHO European region. The numbers of infected persons are increasing and the virus is spreading at an unprecedented speed. All scientific data confirms that this is a time when unfounded skepticism becomes life threatening.

While health workers are developing vaccines to fight the virus, our National Societies are spreading information to the communities and promoting preventive measures that will limit the scale of the pandemic forecasted for the autumn.

"Individual behavior is as essential as personal protective equipment," says Zlatko Kovac, IFRC human pandemic preparedness coordinator for Europe zone. "Our public communication should stress continued vigilance, fight complacency, while being calm and confident in our own preparedness capacities and avoiding any alarmist reactions."

"We should project a global organization that is confident in its experience and capacity to mitigate the impact of a pandemic," he says.

Call to Action signed on 17 August by the International Federation, WHO and two other UN agencies confirm the recognition of the specific role our volunteers and staff. Use it to contact your government and particularly ministries of health. (http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/health/h1n1/Call_to_action.pdf)

The opinion piece signed by Bekele Geleta can be adapted for national markets and placed in national newspapers.. (<http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/News/opinion09/09081402/index.asp>)

These documents will help you formulate your messages on H1N1.

The International Federation secretariat has developed global messaging and support tools for National Societies to be adapted for their local markets.

In September, in addition to the guidelines and manuals available at FedNet all National Societies received posters, radio spot scripts and an animated video – tools that can be easily integrated into their own web-sites and publications.



The messaging revolves around the fact that individuals can do much to protect themselves and their families. The production files for all these tools will be available through FedNet and the FTP server so that you can change them as you see fit.

Links to National Societies that have developed specific sites on the situation you can find at <http://www.ifrc.org/influenza/>.

Our special FedNet page serves as a common space for all relevant documentation and communications tools: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw177746.asp>

You can also access recently launched e-learning package at www.bestdefence.org

Meeting the Global Agenda Goals

Responding to emergencies

Floods in Czech Republic in late June caused severe flooding that killed 13 people and damaged the households of more than 14,450 people affecting also the local infrastructure, agriculture and contaminating the water wells.

The Czech Red Cross emergency units were dispatched immediately to the affected regions to support the efforts of the regional authorities, police and the army. The Red Cross branches focused primarily on the evacuation, water and food distribution. 500 volunteers and staff were helping with distributions of water, blankets, clothing and disinfectants. They also helped with cleaning the houses.

In the coming four months the Czech Red Cross, with support from the International Federation, will ensure 1,000 wells which provide drinking water for around 5,000 people in the flooded regions are cleaned. CHF 295,187 has been allocated from the DREF* to support the Czech Red Cross in its relief effort.

Heavy rainfall in July caused **flooding in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina** destroying the food reserves and damaging the houses of local communities. The Red Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina will support the affected population with food and non-food items to meet the most urgent needs. CHF 43,929 has been allocated from the DREF to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 220 families, or approximately 880 people.

An explosion at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydropower station in eastern Siberia, Russia in mid-August killed more than 70 people. 20 people were seriously injured. The explosion caused pollution of the environment and disruptions to water and energy supplies.

The Russian Red Cross volunteers ensured home delivery of drinking water to 1,800 most vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, elderly people, multi-child and single-parent families in the city of Maina that had no drinking water due to the pollution of the Yenisei River.

Psychosocial support will be provided to 300 people from the affected families. This response operation will build on the experience of the Russian Red Cross in providing psychosocial support gained through operations responding to recent disasters such as the Beslan school crisis, mine explosion in Kemerovo and the South Ossetia refugee crisis.

EUR CHF 29,973 has been allocated from DREF to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 2,100 beneficiaries. The operation was supported with the funds allocated by the European Commission.

* DREF - International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund

Montenegro Red Cross has completed training for the regional and local teams in disaster management – an event within the project agreement on Strengthening of the National Society's capacities, which it is implementing in partnership with the Austrian Red Cross.



▲ Montenegro Red Cross team participated in the international protection and rescue exercise "Budva 2009"/Photo Montenegro Red Cross

WDR 2009: launch for Russia

The launch of the World Disasters Report 2009 at the House of Journalists in Moscow focused on the consequences of global warming and H1N1 pandemic in Russia.

Climate change will lead to growing droughts in the southern regions of Russia causing severe problems for farming and food production. The latter will be connected with growing poverty and increase in migration.

Russian medical experts foresee the H1N1 pandemic peaking at the beginning of November. Jaap Timmer, the International Federations' regional representative in Moscow noted: "The Red Cross Red Crescent task worldwide is to limit the spread of the virus and minimize the consequences through proper information of the population." Among the early action in this respect he named "inform the population, train volunteers, reduce the fear and increase effective measures."

"The Russian Red Cross has experience, a country-wide network and know-how for the work with the population," said Dmitry Fedotov, Vice-President of the Russian Red Cross. "Our role is not just to help people in need, but also mobilize resources, put key people in place and coordinate action," he said.

Oleg Chestnov from the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare noted that the Russian Red Cross is known for its persuasive skills in working with the communities that will ensure early warning among the population long before the epidemic starts. "Face masks may look funny today, but if properly distributed and timely used they can play an important role in the mitigation of a pandemic," he said.

"Early warning and early action are essential for success in disaster response," Russian National Newspapers wrote. "The World Disasters Report 2009 proves it through analysis of its practical experience. Consolidation of the state and civil society efforts in the disaster prevention is for the benefit of all," the paper concluded.



▲ Launch of the WDR 2009 at a press conference at the House of Journalists in Moscow. From right to left: O.Chestnov, Russian Ministry of Health, M.Kobzeva, IFRC, J.Timmer, IFRC regional representative, D.Fedotov, RRC Vice-President/Photo IFRC

Platforms for uniting voices



8th European regional Conference in Vienna

Red Cross of Serbia: concern for older people

In preparing for the European Red Cross Red Crescent conference the Red Cross of Serbia has released a report on its programme for the elderly people that started in 2001.

Serbia is one of the "oldest" nations in Europe - 15 % of its people are over 65. In 2011 this figure will rise to 16% with the number of people above 80 tripling. Due to the underdeveloped social and health care systems, widespread poverty at the time of socio-economic transition, only 9% of people over 70 years of age are able to regularly use institutional support. This leaves a lot of room for the Red Cross concern in Serbia.

Today 1,800 Red Cross volunteers deliver assistance to some 11,000 elderly people throughout the country.

"We give an opportunity for the older people to use their own potential," says Natasha Todorovich, RCS programme coordinator. "Following the British Red Cross experience we try and involve them in programme design and in activities for its implementation. Most of our volunteers are pensioners," she says. The average age of volunteers in this programme is 55.

HumanaS - a network of 15 humanitarian organizations dealing with issues of older people - was initiated by the Red Cross of Serbia two years ago. It participates in implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing, it is present at the Government Council for the Issues of Older People and conducts campaigns for respect and dignified life for the older people.

"My World, Your World, Our World – Free of Elder Abuse" was the theme of the round table discussion organized by the *HumanaS*. Some 70 participants, including representatives of national and local media, took part in the event in Belgrade.

Among other things, it was mentioned that although health workers are obliged to report on any suspicion of abuse of older people, it does not often happen. The number of recorded cases of abuse is low also due to the prevailing feeling of shame among the older people. Norwegian psychiatrist Wenche Malmedal shared the experience of his work in the retirement institutions in Norway, where a lack of proper care and abuse are also a problem.



Photo by Hayari Karapetyan,
Armenian Red Cross

The RCS presented the findings of its recent survey on discrimination issues among the older people conducted in eight Serbian cities. 32% of respondents have been exposed to some form of abuse. With verbal abuse occurring most frequently, the older people emphasised that most painful for them was to be called names, made fun of and be humiliated for lack of some knowledge. They marked that such abuses occur both within families and in communities.

"We believe that more efforts should be taken to sensitize the media," says Natasha Todorovich. "We should avoid sensationalist discourse and additional stigmatization of older people who get abused. Public and civil sectors and individuals all should play a role in preventing such attitudes towards older people," she said.

The issue of aging population will be on the agenda of the 8th European Red Cross Red Crescent conference in April 2010.

A new video In August 2009, the British RC together with the Georgia RC produced a documentary about the situation of older people in Georgia within the Georgia RC project *For and With older people*. Short version is available at the BRC web-site and on the YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWeK9BznYUJ>
<http://www.redcross.org.uk/standard.asp?id=53620>

It is an excellent piece of work for reporting, awareness raising and fund-raising purposes. A longer DVD version is available at the Georgia RC press@grcs.gr

General Assembly of the International Federation

18-21 November, Nairobi, Kenya: member National Societies of the International Federation meet at the General Assembly of the organization.

The General Assembly is where the elected leadership of the International Federation and its Secretary General give an account of their actions since the last session, and where the members give directions for the next two years and beyond, while agreeing on how they wish humanitarian issues to be handled.

The General Assembly will hear statements and reports from the President, the Governing Board and the Secretary General, as well as from other elected or appointed bodies including the Finance Commission.

This year, there are elections for the President, Vice Presidents, and a new Governing Board.

The General Assembly will adopt *Strategy 2020*, which will guide our work over the coming decade.

For the first time, this document includes an introduction of a Federation-wide reporting system. The system will help us demonstrate to the world what we achieve, together, and also generate much more information about humanitarian challenges and the way we meet these.

The General Assembly will discuss ways *Strategy 2020* provides an opportunity for the National Societies to describe the support they would wish to have.

The General Assembly will focus on *Volunteer Development*. It will discuss and adopt new policies on *Humanitarian Diplomacy* and *Migration*.

The agenda for the General Assembly is a full and rich one, and we look forward to learning of the outcomes and decisions in Nairobi, so we can get on with the work of putting these into practice.



Biannual European youth Meeting 2010 will take place 8-12 April in Vienna, Austria.

"This will be a great opportunity for the European Red Cross Youth to meet, to share information and most importantly prepare for the regional Red Cross Red Crescent conference, which will take place in Vienna later that month," says Gerard McHale, European Coordination Committee member from Ireland.

ECC are working on the preparation for the meeting. The main topics of the ECM will be similar to those on the agenda of the European Conference, including Implementation of Strategy 2020.

"Good communication is key to active participation within our organisation, and the European Newsletter is a great opportunity for us to communicate with European Red Cross Youth," noted McHale.

Platforms for uniting voices

First Aid For a Safer Future,

Focus on Europe

A new advocacy report *First Aid For a Safer Future* has been produced by the IFRC media unit prior to the World First Aid day on 12 September.

The pdf version of the report and related press release have been sent to all National Societies in EZ. Both documents are strictly under embargo until Wednesday, September 9 at 14:00 GMT (16:00 Geneva time).

The report (available in English and French) is an advocacy and marketing tool for National Societies to advocate nationally for more first aid training to be made available for everyone.



The report will be launched to international media during a special press briefing on September 9 at 11:00 at the UN Palace of Nations in Geneva.

The report can be adapted to each country. We encourage all National Societies involved in first aid to use it in their communications activities around World First Aid Day on 12 September.

Migration: supporting the vulnerable – a criminal offense?

Red Cross volunteers are in a trap: at the Europe Zone office in Budapest, some disturbing information has arrived in the shape of stories about long-standing and recent legislation, in several countries, that makes it a criminal offence to provide assistance to some of the most vulnerable among us: undocumented – or “illegal” migrants.

In many cases such legislation does not distinguish between those who are involved in facilitation of undocumented migration and those who provide humanitarian assistance to the migrants. And so Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers as well as their National Societies are caught in a trap: they have to make a choice between their humanitarian duty, on the one hand, and risking prosecution, on the other.

Such legislation, apart from the unacceptable anti-humanitarian effects, flies in the face of the commitments States Parties to the Geneva Conventions made at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007. At that conference, States agreed on a declaration - “Together for Humanity” – which acknowledged “the role of National Societies, based on the principles of humanity and impartiality, and in consultation with public authorities, in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants, *irrespective of their legal status*”. (italics added)

Importantly, there is also a larger question of the humanitarian consequences: the new-born children that go un-registered, their lack of access to health and other essential services, and the lack of protection of those individuals and families who live in the shadows of European society.

Europe Zone office would be very interested in learning from National Societies what their experience has been with legislation that prohibits volunteers from assisting vulnerable migrants, and how they see problems in that regard addressed in the future.

Information on this matter can be sent to the migration coordinator, Ms Vera Rangelova (vera.rangelova@ifrc.org) in the Europe Zone office in Budapest.

* * *

A New Tool Kit

“**Not Just Numbers**” is a toolkit for teaching young people about migration and asylum in the European Union produced by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

It is suitable for teaching young people between the ages of 12 and 18 and is available in 24 EU Member States in 20 languages.

To download the toolkit, go to:

<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/njn/lang/en>

World Humanitarian Day

On 19 August for the first time the international community marked *World Humanitarian Day*.

This day was instituted by the United Nations to recall the humanitarian obligation we share to save, preserve and protect human life and dignity. Volunteers and staff of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are, across the globe, in the forefront of this – on this day we recall their efforts and their achievements.

It was on 19th August 2003 that 22 dedicated UN workers were killed and many more were injured in the attack on the UN Office in Baghdad. In the past ten years, some 700 humanitarian workers across the world have lost their lives in attacks, kidnappings and robberies and now the 19th August is a day on which we can recall their sacrifices and pay homage to their dedication.

World Humanitarian Day comes out of the United Nations and represents an occasion to reach out to our colleagues in the UN and the wider humanitarian world and reaffirm our partnerships and mutual appreciation.

For more information about *World Humanitarian Day* go to: <http://ochaonline.un.org/News/WorldHumanitarianDay/tabid/5677/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Armenian Red Cross: a new stage in fighting Tuberculosis

Since 2007 the Armenian Red Cross has been participating in the national Tuberculosis (TB) programme conducted by the Armenian Ministry of Health. In April 2009, with support from *Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company* and *Medecins Sans Frontier/France* (MSF) the society started a pilot project assisting vulnerable people suffering from multi-drug resistant (MDR) forms of TB in Yerevan, Armenia's capital.

Since 1990 TB morbidity in Armenia has grown threefold and mortality has doubled. 600 people are suffering from MDR TB. MSF operates four MDR TB treatment rooms for 160 patients in the Armenian capital and now 20 more people are getting help from the Armenian Red Cross. 420 other people do not yet get such support.

Poverty, unavailability of drugs, difficulties in treatment adherence, often carelessness and despair are among the reasons why people interrupt the treatment course putting them to danger of MDR TB.

In addition to direct observation of treatment, the Red Cross provides regular supplies of food and hygiene parcels to patients. Information dissemination is also part of the society's action.

"By the end of 2009, 60 more patients will get ambulatory treatment and support in the new Red Cross room that we are now preparing," says Narine Matevosyan, Red Cross health coordinator.

The Armenian Red Cross is gaining more experience in this field from the Global Alliance on HIV and Tuberculosis in Europe which it joined in December 2008.



▲ Karo S., 35 is determined to fight the illness for fifteen months until May 2010. "It is psychologically very difficult. At times I feel that I am alone in this world, face to face with my illness. Then life becomes a continuous torture," says Karo, who comes to this room every day. "There is always a person here to talk to, a person who understands both the disease and you. If it was not for this support from the Red Cross, I would not be able to pay for these medicines for such a long time," he adds.

Photo by H.Karapetyan/Armenian Red Cross.

Beslan school crisis: five years of grieving

1 September is a memorial day in Beslan – a small town in North Ossetia, Russia. It is the day when 330 innocent people, most of them children, were killed in a siege of the city school N1 on 1-3 September 2004. Hundreds are still suffering from the wounds and losses. The Russian Red Cross continues to support some of these people at its rehabilitation centre in Beslan.

"All staff and volunteers who have been involved in the Russian Red Cross programmes in Beslan 2004-2009 will be on duty at the commemoration events devoted to the tragedy," says Lyudmila Kargieva, coordinator of the Red Cross centre. "It is not easy to carry the memories of those days. Understanding and solidarity help us live on with the wounds that are still burning," she says.

Maxim Marmur, a famous Russian photographer, was in Beslan during the tragic event. He visited it again last summer to get documentary evidence that would help people remember the hard lesson of modern history.

As a reporter for Russian and international agencies, Marmur has been on several field missions with the Red Cross. His photos helped us make people aware of humanitarian problems and respond.

"This time I went to photograph the eyes that once witnessed hell," says the journalist who dreams to publish a photo album from Beslan. "Apart from fear, there is one more strong feeling people have – conscience," he notes. His photos are the eyes and the voice of those who live in Beslan today.



▲ Soslan Bogayev with the portraits of his mother and two sisters who perished during the school siege. Photo by M.Marmur.

▲ Lidia and her son Sergei who lost his sister, his wife and their four children during the siege. Photo by M.Marmur.

P.S. 1-14 September, Russian Red Cross mobile photo exhibition "Red Cross and Beslan: five years together" will be on display at the RRC Headquarters in Moscow. Later on it will be available for the National Societies that participated in support programmes for Beslan.

Belarus: tackling problems together

In July, Belarus Red Cross Day Care Centre for children with special needs opened in Grodno, city in the north-west of Belarus.

The centre is a joint project implemented by the Grodno branch with support from the Austrian and Slovak Red Cross societies. According to Romania Skomoroshko, head of the branch in Grodno, more than EUR 100,000 was assigned for the implementation of the project.

A mobile Red Cross team consisting of a physician-consultant, a medical nurse, a psychologist, a social workers and Red Cross volunteers started working in the city in January 2009 attending to 50 children with special needs at their homes.



▲ Opening of the Grodno Red Cross Day care Centre. July 2009 / Photo Belarus Red Cross

Now the children and their parents will be able to attend the centre where, with support of Red Cross workers, they will implement their own social and integration initiatives as well as get professional counseling and support.

"The centre in Grodno is an example of one of the basic principles of the International Red Cross Movement – the principle of humanity and the aspiration to provide help for the needy people," said Max Santner from the Austrian Red Cross at the opening ceremony in Grodno. "It is an example of how public organizations and town authorities, volunteers and professionals, the Red Cross organizations of the three countries may efficiently cooperate settling difficult tasks," he noted.

Resource mobilization

Programmes in Europe zone		Budget	Funding	Coverage*
MAA65001	Europe Zone	1,701,538	1,014,280	60%
MAA66001	C Europe and S Caucasus	698,058	430,678	62%
MAABA002	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,118,083	364,253	33%
MAAKV001	Kosovo	799,260	616,544	77%
MAAME001	Montenegro	560,289	90,900	16%
Traditional MAARS001	Serbia	1,952,439	1,258,842	64%
MAA67002	CHARP (Chernobyl)	544,248	361,845	66%
MAA67003	Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine	294,332	13,079	4%
MAABY002	Belarus	1,165,012	804,371	69%
MAAMD002	Moldova	455,106	170,326	37%
MAARU002	Russian Federation	3,491,712	2,834,730	81%
MAAUA002	Ukraine	586,818	36,590	6%
MAAAM002	Armenia	593,720	281,047	47%
MAAAZ002	Azerbaijan	586,120	185,425	32%
MAAGE002	Georgia	1,198,105	946,334	79%
MAAKG001	Kyrgyzstan	1,190,433	784,157	66%
MAAKZ001	Kazakhstan	1,749,856	1,486,797	85%
MAATJ002	Tajikistan	1,952,629	1,600,043	82%
MAATM001	Turkmenistan	1,177,678	627,570	53%
MAAUZ001	Uzbekistan	1,220,975	743,309	61%
Subtotal EUROPE ZONE		23,036,413	14,624,961	63%

*The table reflects the situation with funding coverage by country, not by programme. August 2009.

Open EU calls for proposals. August 2009

Project	Objectives / COUNTRY	Deadline
"People to People Co-operation"	To promote interaction between people in border areas. ROMANIA, UKRAINE, MOLDOVA	28 Sep
"Environmental challenges and emergency preparedness"	Environmental problems faced by the border areas. ROMANIA, UKRAINE, MOLDOVA	28 Oct
Civil Society & Local Initiatives	Capacity building of civil society organizations. Focus on issues of disability and children's right. RUSSIA	30 Oct
Joint Programme "Black sea 2007-2013"	Promoting economic and social development in the Black Sea Basin areas. IPA REGION	12 Oct
IPA Info 2008 Civil Society EU Info	Public debate in Croatia on EU membership. CROATIA	14 Oct
Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013	To protect the environment, use of natural resources CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	16 Oct
Support to refugees, IDPs in Serbia	Accommodation, self-employment, income generation of refugees and vulnerable domicile population. SERBIA	27 Oct
Capacities of CSOs in sustainable development policies	Waste and water management, transport, energy efficiency, regional development. CROATIA	16 Nov
Support to Return to Kotor Varos Municipality	Return of Refugees, IDPs with participation of local authorities. BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA	30 Nov
Access to education for students with disabilities	Individual educational plans and additional education for teachers and other educational staff working with children/students with disabilities. CROATIA	4 Dec
Human rights, freedoms in countries /regions where they are most at risk	To support civil society organisations. MULTI-COUNTRY	30 Oct
EIDHR country based support scheme 2009	Agendas of human rights, democratic reforms, political representation/participation for CSO. BELARUS	12 Oct
EIDHR country-based support scheme 2009	Agendas of human rights, democratic reforms, political representation/participation for CSO. UKRAINE	9 Nov
EIDHR country based support scheme 2009	Agendas of human rights, democratic reforms, political representation/participation for CSO. MOLDOVA	23 Oct

"Would you let this girl down?"

Under this heading the American columnist Nicholas Kristof, who often writes about humanitarian issues, published a column in the International Herald Tribune on 8 July 2009," (the online version can be found at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/09/opinion/09kristof.html?_r=1).

The title of the column refers to some initial reflections on why it is that world leaders like those participating in G8 meetings would do everything in their power to rescue an individual person from a dangerous situation, yet sometimes drag their feet over action to rescue *thousands* of individuals caught in a life-threatening situation.

In an attempt to try and explain such apparent paradoxes, Kristof refers to the work of others, which explores the question of "why we're so willing to try to assist a stranger before us, while so unwilling to donate to try to save strangers from malaria half a world away".

Kristof's answer? "One of the reasons", he believes, "is that humanitarians are abjectly ineffective at selling their causes. Any brand of toothpaste is peddled with far more sophistication than the life-saving work of aid groups. Do-gooders also have a penchant for exaggeration, so that the public often has more trust in the effectiveness of toothpaste than of humanitarian aid.

There's growing evidence that jumping up and down about millions of lives at stake can even be counterproductive. A number of studies have found that we are much more willing to donate to one needy person than to several. In one experiment, researchers solicited donations for a \$300,000 fund that in one version would save the life of one child, and in another the lives of eight children. People contributed more when the fund would save only one life."

Is this relevant to us? To the National Societies of Europe? To the International Federation? Have we got it right in terms of how we present our concerns, our hopes, the needs we try and address and the resources required? Do we focus too much on the misery and too little on the successes, or is the balance between them right?

Nicholas Kristof cannot answer these questions for us; we have to do that ourselves. But it might be worthwhile noting his parting shot, referring especially to the collective failure of humanitarians in reporting on what goes well:

"...if a toothpaste company had these miserable results in its messaging, it would go back to the drawing board. That's what bleeding hearts need to do as well."

Human resources

Staff changes in the EZ team

Jassen Slivensky, formerly a staff-on-loan from Bulgarian Red Cross working as regional disaster management coordinator for Central Europe and Caucasus, has been selected as disaster management delegate for Georgia. He began his three month mission on 8 July 2009.

Davron Mukhamadiev has been selected as regional health coordinator, Moscow and starts his mission on 1 September.

Ibolya Takacs joined the EZO finance team on 18 August as finance assistant.

Carl Odegaard supported by Norwegian Red Cross will return to Budapest on 1 September to assist the regional representation for Central Europe and Southern Caucasus for a 12 month staff on loan assignment

In collaboration with the CEU (Central European University) and Corvinus University in Budapest **Frederick Danquah** and **Agnes Gेलencser** started their two-month internships in August 2009 at the EZO.

During August 2009 **Monika Kenderessy** was welcomed back to the EZO as a volunteer with our communications unit.

Oyvind Stang, a trainee from Norwegian Red Cross, will work in Georgia from 31 August until 5 November.

Departures:

Henriette Koos after seven dedicated years of service – most recently as assistant to the deputy head of zone - has left the EZO to undertake a mission with the German Red Cross as programme manager in Sri Lanka.

We are all aware of the danger of internet scams that target us as individuals. Tearful stories of fallen dynasties in African countries, the need for medical assistance for a specific child, and the like circulate everywhere.

We believe, however, there are increasing numbers of scams that target the humanitarian sector and civil society in general. A recent example was a genuine-looking invitation to a UN conference on education for development, to be held in London, except that the genuine event took place in Germany, and two weeks earlier.

There is little we can do to protect ourselves against receiving these scams, but we encourage national societies, their volunteers and staff to be vigilant and, if they are in doubt, research the issue before acting.

Upcoming events

- 1 September** Antii-trafficking network meeting. EZO, Budapest
- 7-8 September** Partnership meeting “Beyond Borders; from Donorship to Partnership” Kiev, Ukraine
- 8-10 September** HR Network Meeting. EZO, Budapest.
- 20-30 September** Conference on Active Citizenship and Adult Education. Gothenburg, Sweden.
- 25-28 September** 13th ERNA annual meeting “Inclusion, Communication and Respect”. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- 30 Sept-2 Oct** IFRC Governing Board meeting. Geneva.
- 1 October** International Day of Older People
- 14 October** International Day of Natural Disaster Reduction
- 16-18 October** ENPS Annual Forum. “Stress awareness and management: Do we practice what we preach?” Dubrovnik, Croatia
<http://enps.redcross.at>
- 2-3 November** Global Forum on Migration and Development. Athens, Greece.
- 16 November** International Day of Tolerance
- 18-21 November** IFRC General Assembly. Nairobi, Kenya
- 19-20 November** Global Ministerial Conference on Road safety. Moscow, Russia

Some new publications

**A Handbook on psychosocial interventions
Community based psychosocial support.**
(Trainer's and participant's book)
Downloaded from www.ifrc.org/psychosocial.
Send a request for a hard copy to
psychosocial.center@ifrc.org

**Concept of Coordination of Psychosocial Support activities
in Europe.** Send a request to sonja.tanevska@ifrc.org

This newsletter is produced bimonthly by the Europe zone based on the International Federation's monthly management reports and materials prepared and sent by National Societies, International Federation communication officers and RC/EU Office

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