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# Europe Zone

 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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## The difference 20 million volunteers can make



(Detail) Volunteers from about 150 countries gathered in Salerno, Italy, in June 2009 to attend the 3rd World Youth Meeting and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the idea of the Red Cross/Marco Kobler, ICRC

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**D**ear friends,  
back on track after December's break, we now look ahead to the new year just begun, a 2011 that the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement expects a lot from.

This year the world celebrates the 10th anniversary of 2001 International Year of Volunteering, as well as the European Year of Volunteering. Marked in its first half also by the International Year of Youth, inaugurated in August last year, 2011 will also see the convening of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and with it a reflection on how volunteers and youth have addressed and will address today's and tomorrow's challenges.

What role do volunteers and youth play today in our Movement? How do they contribute to making a real difference in their communities? Voluntary work is one of the Seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and the concept of voluntary service implies that one serves not because of any constraint but because of a freely accepted commitment. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers donate their time and skills without expecting anything in return. They're the driving force of our Movement, the engine of our humanitarian outreach. And about half of these some 20 million active humanitarians are young people.

This year, the Kyrgyz Red Crescent will start the implementation of a project of volunteering in emergencies: many among the volunteers recruit-

ed by the National Society are youth. Last 1 December, on the occasion of World AIDS Day, thousands of RCRC volunteers gathered in streets, squares and other public places throughout Europe and Central Asia to raise general awareness of HIV/AIDS. Most of them were youth, talking to their peers.

In their different roles of intercultural ambassadors and peer-to-peer trainers, young volunteers can add value and make a difference not only in their own communities, but also in the well functioning of their National Societies. But for that to be possible, it is necessary that voluntary service be adequately protected, recognised and promoted globally, and that youth be included in decision-making and planning processes at all levels.

In order to support National Societies in protecting, recognising and promoting their volunteers, the Federation has launched a global campaign, "Find the volunteer inside you", which will run throughout 2011, and represents a global vision and a strong call to action. This is the main challenge which lies ahead of us. This year comes as a unique opportunity for the Red Cross Red Crescent to further promote volunteerism as essential to address today's humanitarian challenges, and also to attract and engage new volunteers who can make a difference in the work we do.

**Anitta Underlin**  
Director of Europe Zone

## RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

### Red Cross Societies in the Balkans working tirelessly to eliminate the consequences of the floods

Located in the north-western part of **Albania**, the Shkodra Prefecture is among the areas of the Balkans which have most seriously hit by the floods of the past weeks.

The Shkodra Branch of the Albanian Red Cross has mobilized more than 50 people between volunteers, staff and disaster team members in response to an emergency that, on a national level, saw some 2,600 buildings and houses being flooded, and approximately 14,000 inhabitants needing evacuation from the flooded areas in early December. As of 4 January, 670 inhabitants had not yet returned in their houses, 33 houses were still flooded and 299 were surrounded by water.

A national appeal was launched to seek the solidarity of citizens, business companies and public institutions, and sup-



Red Cross Societies are striving to carry on the recovery operations following the flooding, some of them thwarted in their work by the grip of ice-cold weather of the last days, with snow, ice and sub-zero temperatures disrupting travel and leaving roads treacherous and impassable in places.

deployed a four-member RDRT to conduct a detailed assessment of needs in the recovery phase.

In **Montenegro**, 11 municipalities were seriously affected and some 6630 persons were evacuated. The Montenegro Red Cross distributed all of its emergency

### Stories from the field - Albanian Red Cross

Today the distribution ended around 5 pm. It took place in a highly populated neighbourhood with many families to be assisted, where volunteers and staff of the Albanian Red Cross stayed until the end. After the truck leaves for Tirana, the branch secretary and the volunteer's management coordinator returns to the branch office. There they discuss about today's work and how distributions for the coming day will be organised. Then, Shpëtim, the branch secretary, leaves for the Prefecture where the local government emergency unit was set up. The purpose is to meet with representatives

of the unit, inform them on the progress in the delivery and urge them to prepare a list of beneficiaries for the other areas assigned to the Albanian Red Cross for distribution.

Around 8 pm, after the meeting in the Prefecture, Shpëtim is ready to go home. This can be called a lucky day considering the usual late working hours. Shpëtim's apartment is in a neighbourhood flooded with half a meter of standing water. The Toyota Land Cruiser has to approach the stairs very closely so that he can jump carefully and enter his flat without getting soaked. But this time there will be no jump from the Toyota: the telephone rings while he is in the car. The volunteers assigned to as-

sist in a collective centre where 120 roma families are being hosted call to inform him that three more families will be accommodated in the centre. In this centre, the Albanian Red Cross has distributed food and water to all these families since 4th December. Apparently, there is nothing left to be distributed for these new families. Shpëtim asks the driver to go immediately and meet the team in the centre and together buy the necessary food and non-food items for the newly accommodated families. The driver insists to drive him first to his home but Shpëtim refuses. "It will be too late then for the families, hurry up to the camp, we will make a romantic trip like in Venice". Indeed, buses cannot run in the flooded area, and the only public transport

means are the boats of the fishermen. The municipality has requested them to use the boats as public buses. Till 2 pm, the service is offered free of charge (the municipality reimburses the cost).

After the driver has left, Shpëtim hopes to be lucky enough to find a boat, otherwise he will have to take off his clothes and walk through the 300 meters that divide his house from the dry area. Luck is with him today: two men smoking and driving a boat in the direction of Shpëtim: "300 Lekë - said one of the two to him - night service." "No problem, man". Indeed, during the day the fee is 200 lekë. But, it's not the time to negotiate, it's time to go home and rest.

port the capacity of the National Society to help the affected people. A request for support was also addressed to the IFRC, in response to which CHF 204,031 was allocated from the DREF to assist some 2,000 people over a period of three months. Since 4 December, in cooperation with the Emergency Committee of the Shkodra Prefecture, the Albanian Red Cross has provided support in the distribution of 2000 standard kits within the town of Shkodra and in the communes of Dajç, Ana e Malit, reaching so far some 647 families.

In other areas of the Balkan Peninsula,

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** 5,806 households were affected by the flooding, and the Red Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina identified some 1,450 families in need of urgent assistance with basic food, water and non-food items.

CHF 218,932 was allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance, and approximately 25 staff and 150 volunteers have so far been activated and deployed in the affected areas to monitor the situation, collect information and prepare for the distribution of relief items. The IFRC Europe Zone Office in Budapest

stock according to local needs and applied for DREF support, receiving assistance in the amount of CHF 111,031 on 13 December, 2010.

Three mobile operators in Montenegro (Telenor, T-com and M-tel), in cooperation with the Montenegro Red Cross opened lines for citizens to donate to the affected population. All received funds will be transferred to Montenegro Red Cross which will use the funds to cover some of the needs of the affected population. All local Red Cross branches in the affected municipalities are very active in storing and distributing relief items and engaging

## RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

local donors to provide in-kind donations, which are stored in the local Red Cross warehouses, and then distributed, according to the needs.

In **Kosovo**, an estimated 850 households have been affected, among whom the most affected 600 families have been identified as in need of immediate assistance. Many of the affected families had to be evacuated from their houses and sheltered in neighbouring villages. Following the floods, a DREF operation was approved, which enabled the IFRC Office and local Red Cross volunteers to develop a plan of action, and start the process of procurement and delivery of food and non food items. Due to heavy snow in Kosovo, the situation of the already affected families from flood has been further deteriorated. Also access to affected areas is becoming difficult.

"2010 has been a very tough year for Red Cross Red Crescent Societies in the Europe Zone, with over 25 natural disasters throughout the continent, twice as many as in 2009. More than 50% of which were floods" said Slobodanka Curic, DM Coordinator in the Europe Zone Office "We must focus our efforts on early warning and risk reduction, so that National So-

cieties are able to respond more quickly and efficiently".

### Federation fighting road carnage in Eastern Europe

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death and disability among young people aged 5-29 years. On average, every hour one child dies on roads in these countries and many more are injured. The average mortality rate is nearly four times higher than the European average.

National Societies in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS - ex USSR minus the Baltics and Georgia) have profound experience in teaching and providing first aid. Most of them have integrated road safety in their first aid programmes. In 2009 in these countries about 40,000 people, including commercial drivers, learner drivers and police officers were trained.

"Response to the increasing carnage on the roads in the CIS requires joint efforts and cooperation of all concerned institutions, including the Inter-parliamentary Assembly, national governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations", noted **Jaap Timmer, head of the IFRC Regional Representation in Moscow.**

He was speaking at the recent International Road Safety Congress held by the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of CIS members in St. Petersburg.

In these countries Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are already part of the increasing global response through public awareness, first aid services and training. They are working closely with the national ministries, local and international NGOs, and the private sector. Tajikistan and

Kyrgyzstan Red Crescent Societies are already members of the National Road Safety Committees. Belarus Red Cross has officially applied to join. In addition they set up a good example by introducing internal road safety regulation and using Personal road safety commitment cards for members and volunteers.

Speaking at the plenary session Jaap Timmer called the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS member nations and national parliaments to adopt new legislation that makes a basic first aid certificate compulsory for professional and new drivers in each country. Among the CIS countries, only Armenia has introduced an obligatory first aid certificate for new drivers.

Tatyana Lineva, Chairlady of the Russian Red Cross Saint-Petersburg branch further developed this idea in the panel discussion devoted to the health and education aspects of road safety. In particular she emphasized that first aid training should be continuous during one's life.

Kathleen Elsig, Road Safety Manager for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the Global Road Safety partnership, and a member of the IFRC delegation noted "National Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent are strong partners to the government on road safety in many countries around the world. Volunteers can provide crucial support to national road crash injury prevention efforts by getting messages about road safety to people in communities."

United Nations resolution № 64 passed on 2 March 2010 declared 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety. At the same time it encouraged national governments to better cooperate with the National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies.

The final Declaration of the Saint-Petersburg Congress recommended the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS member nations to adopt laws on road safety that could be a model for all CIS states.

A follow up of the decisions by the Parliamentary Assembly for the CIS at the parliamentarians in each of the countries by each of the National Societies while promoting compulsory First Aid certificates for drivers, will offer a clear opportunity for humanitarian diplomacy and will unite CIS National Societies in their efforts. It will significantly contribute to improving the situations with the road safety in the region by creating a unified methodology and first aid training for all.



Volunteers of the Red Cross of Montenegro are distributing food and hygiene parcels, water, electricity cans, blankets, rubber boots, kitchen sets, mattresses to the affected population. (CIS - Cross of Montenegro)

## RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

### Red Cross responds to Europe's extreme weather

Red Cross societies across Europe worked flat out to combat the effects of the severe weather which hit the region last December. Floods, snow and temperatures as low as minus 33 cost dozens of lives, wreaked havoc on transport and made many thousands of people vulnerable.

The worst of the weather was in the Balkans, where floods hit Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Red Cross teams visited the worst-affected places and the Federation's Europe Zone office is helping national societies with their response.

Heavy snow caused misery in other parts of Europe. Up to 30 people reportedly froze to death in **Poland**, where temperatures plummeted. Polish Red Cross distributed aid to people worst affected by recent floods; the relief items came at a critical time.

**Germany** was also severely affected, with one death reported and temperatures down to -12.

On the highways the centre of the country German Red Cross sent out National Disaster Response teams to take care of people stuck in their vehicles, giving them blankets and hot drinks, as well as setting up shelters in railway stations.

In Berlin the Red Cross expanded its meal

delivery service to provide hot food to 7,000 elderly people. This not only gave physical and moral support, it also meant pensioners did not have to risk accident by venturing out on icy streets.

In **Ireland**, Red Cross ambulances and

"We urge people not to travel unless absolutely necessary and to call in regularly on elderly friends and neighbours to see if they need help in staying warm or with provisions", said Chairman David O'Callaghan.

Polish Red Cross volunteers, under the severe weather conditions of the latest days, delivering household devices to the people affected by the floods which struck the country earlier this year / Polish Red Cross



crews have been working inside the national emergency plan in eleven counties. One team rescued a pregnant woman stranded in her car on a remote mountain pass. Home Care teams visited patients in isolated villages, and the Society called on the population to be extra careful.

**French Red Cross** extended its usual winter operations, upping the number of outreach teams from 50 to 135, extending opening hours of day centres, and opening overnight shelters for people in need. A total of 5,000 staff and volunteers have provided services to the homeless.

In the UK, **British Red Cross** volunteers set off on foot to give first aid, and to act as 'snowfriends', visiting the homes of vulnerable people to offer extra help. Meanwhile volunteer crews with 4x4 Land Rover ambulances fought through heavy snows to provide life saving treatment, delivered essential medical equipment to those in need, and transported patients and vital personnel.

One ambulance worker in the British midlands summed up the Europe-wide Red Cross response well: "The Red Cross' support has been a godsend in these conditions. Please pass on my sincere thanks to all the volunteers and staff for their fantastic support."

To read the whole story, [click here](#).

British Red Cross volunteers responding to the severe weather which affected the country last December / British Red Cross



## PAST AND FUTURE EVENTS

### Between World AIDS Day and the International Volunteer Day

On 1 December, 2010, like every year, thousands of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers throughout Europe gathered in streets, shopping centres, cinemas, schools, bar and clubs to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, fight stigma, and promote safer behaviour in their communities. All of them are the same volunteers that the world celebrates on the International Volunteer Day, on 5 December.

This year in particular, on the threshold of 2011 International Year of Volunteering, 5 December acquires special importance for the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, because not only can it help to increase public awareness of the contribution that its 20 million active volunteers offer to their communities, but it also reminds us that, in order to do more, do better and reach further, more volunteers are needed worldwide.

In the week between 29 November and 5 December, in the framework of the national Red Cross campaign "Impara l'ABC (learn ABC): Abstinence, Be faithful, Condom", some 20.000 Italian Red Cross youth volunteers were involved in more than 100 STI/HIV/AIDS awareness-raising initiatives throughout the country. Such presence of young volunteers

on the territory, possible also thanks to the sponsorship of the Italian Ministry of Youth, proved of the huge success of the peer education-based HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention programme which the Italian Red Cross youth have been running since 2006.

In **Tajikistan**, from 29 November to 1 December, the Red Crescent held different activities in Kulyab city, Khujand city, and the capital Dushanbe, where volunteers distributed information materials on HIV/AIDS and condoms, and conducted mini-quizzes among target groups (general labourers and migrants).

In **Kyrgyzstan**, where in the last eight years more than 3,000 Red Crescent volunteers have received peer-to-peer training on HIV/AIDS prevention, on 1 December the volunteers of the National Society organized a "flash mob", with the aim of focusing people's attention on the red ribbon symbol and on the issues of stigma and discrimination towards people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Balloons with messages from people living with HIV were launched from six different places around the city

of Bishkek.

For many years now, the **Armenian Red Cross Society** has been celebrating World AIDS Day with different large scale events through its Youth Volunteers, in the framework of HIV prevention programmes. This year, as part of the HIV prevention program "Time for choice", funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Armenian Red Cross volunteers organized open lessons in four different high schools of Yerevan, aimed at informing schoolchildren about HIV/AIDS, transmission and prevention ways.

In **Moldova**, activities were organized in many regions more intensely in the city of Bender and in the capital Chişinău. Essay and poster competitions were organized for middle and high school students, while their best works were part of an exhibition displayed in the City Culture Center of Bender, which was also venue for "Let's save live together", a concert featuring young local artists emphasizing healthy lifestyle in between hip-hop rhymes and tango steps. According to Mariana, a high-school student attending was "a fun and cool way to fight fear and unreasonable fear of HIV/AIDS."

To read the whole story, click here.

### SAVE THE DATE

#### 2011

International Year of Volunteering  
European Year of Volunteering  
International Year of Youth (first half)  
International Year of Forests  
International Year for People of African descent

#### January

27 - International Holocaust Remembrance Day  
29 - World Leprosy Day

#### February

6 - International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation  
21 - International Mother Language Day

### Towards a mine-free world

"At national and community levels, the Red Cross and Red Crescent's auxiliary role to the public authorities in the humanitarian field enables us to work with governments to reduce the harm caused by these weapons"

Prof. Shyqyri Subashi  
Albanian Red Cross, President

On 2-3 December 1997, representatives of over 100 States gathered in Ottawa to sign the **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**. In doing so,



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these States expressed their determination to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines

From 29 November to 3 December, 2010, the **Tenth Meeting of the States Parties was held in Geneva**. The Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP) was a formal diplomatic meeting of the 156 States that have accepted the 1997 Convention.

The 10MSP was the first time that the international community gathered formally to discuss the problems caused by anti-personnel mines since the landmark 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, where the States Parties adopted the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014.

"In 2007 during the 30th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference, a considerable number of Governments and National Societies made pledges toward preserving human life and dignity through the faithful implementation of international humanitarian law. With the next international Conference coming up in one year's time in November in Geneva, we see that reports of the progress-made in implementing these pledges are being made at country level by Governments and National Societies and we take this opportunity to express our appreciation".

Prof. Shyqyri Subashi  
*Albanian Red Cross, President*

At the meeting, approximately 700 delegates representing over 100 States and dozens of international and non-governmental organisations discussed the Geneva Progress Report 2009-2010. This report documents progress made between during the first year of the application of the Cartagena Action Plan, in the pursuit of a mine-free world.

The States Parties also developed solutions to challenges faced in implementing the Convention, including challenges related to clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiled mines and ensuring sustained support for landmine survivors. A key area of interest at the 10MSP was enhancing international cooperation and assistance. In addition, the 10MSP considered requests for extensions on States' ten year deadlines for clearing mined areas. Requests were submitted by Chad, Colombia, Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Zimbabwe.

For more info, see the site of the Tenth meeting of the States parties to the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines.

"Time is ticking away. We are now at a point in the life of the Convention where not only meetings are important but more actual implementation is essential."

Dr. Jakob Kellenberger  
*ICRC, President*

### Montenegro Red Cross: 135 years on

On 29 November, 1875, Montenegro ratified the First Geneva Convention and the Red Cross of Montenegro became the 22nd internationally acclaimed member of International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

In 29 November 2010, 135 years on, the Montenegro Red Cross celebrated a "very significant date, important for this organization, but also for the state of Montenegro itself, which, through the internationally recognised activities of the Montenegro Red Cross, has many times showed the power of humanity in its activities with people in need" stated Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, under whose patronage the celebrations for the 135th anniversary were held, in the Royal Theatre in Cetinje.

After the recognition of the state independence of Montenegro, on 12 June, 2006, the Assembly of the Montenegro Red Cross proclaimed the National Society as independent, and on 21 September of the same year, the International Committee of

the Red Cross renewed recognition to the Montenegro Red Cross as an independent National Society that meets all required conditions for full membership in the Movement. Membership was then officially confirmed during the XVI session of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in November 2007, when the Montenegro Red Cross became the 186th member of the International Movement.

"With the full support and trust of citizens, governmental bodies and the Red Cross family, we have expanded the scope of our work in accomplishing the Red Cross mission and become an integral part of the national strategy for disaster preparedness and response" commented **Dr. Asim Dizdarevic, former President of the Montenegro Red Cross**.

"The Red Cross Society of Montenegro is a Society with whom we in the Europe Zone are very familiar, thanks in part to its excellent DM preparedness and response work" said **Anitta Underlin, Director of the Europe Zone** "I know that you have been in existence for over 135 years, which is a proud achievement by any standards. Your current activities put you in a good position to progress towards achieving the aims of Strategy 2020, which is something we in the Europe Zone will do all we can to support".



(Detail) Dr. Asim Dizdarevic, former President of the ICRC, former Secretary General of the ICRC of Montenegro (left), together with Anitta Underlin, Director of the Europe Zone (middle), during the celebrations for the 135th anniversary of the Red Cross of Montenegro

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

### The Red Cross of Serbia: volunteering decreases the risk of depression

In view of the **International Volunteers Day** on 5 December and **2011 International Year of Volunteering**, the Red Cross of Serbia wanted to put emphasis on those of its volunteers who belong to the elderly population: a survey targeting Red Cross older volunteers was thus carried out, whose outcomes clearly show how volunteering decreases the risk of depression among the elderly.

The Republic of Serbia has one of the oldest populations in Europe, with 15.4% of the people being above 65. The estimations are that by 2011 that percentage will rise to over 17% and the number of people above 80 will triple. What makes such trends alarming, however, is that the position of older people in Serbia is made more difficult due to the insufficient capacities of social welfare and health care systems, as well as the widespread poverty.

Indeed, most of the volunteers in the Serbian Red Cross are elderly people themselves, which speaks about active ageing being a very important component of it. Through the programme, older people are stimulated to use their own physical and mental potential and, following the recommendation of the British Red Cross, representatives of older people have also been involved in the process of programme design, which proved crucial for their well-being.

Elderly people are active as volunteers according to their possibilities, and maintain an altruistic attitude which promotes their own mental health, prevents depressive symptoms and brings them meaning and quality of life.

### “Don’t give up working for a Red Cross at its fullest”

*“We, Italian Red Cross Youth, want to positively impact on society, and we want to do that by saving lives and changing minds”*

Second National Assembly of Italian Red Cross Youth  
 Final document

*“In such an organisation as the Italian Red Cross, youth volunteers play a key role in changing mindsets and engaging their peers in voluntary work. Their role is essential for the realisation of activities in favour of vulnerable groups and the diffusion of principles and humanitarian values, as well as health-related information”.*

Francesco Rocca  
 Italian Red Cross, Extraordinary Commissioner

“In our continuous efforts to be close to vulnerable people, we must go on and on, even if we get ill, tired, stressed out, and go the extra mile and then more” by these words, **Rosario Valastro, National President of the Red Cross Youth**, in his speech to the 800 participants remarked the need to concentrate all efforts and resources of youth volunteers on humanitarian action.

*“Some 20,000 youth volunteers of the Italian Red Cross work every day on the territory, bringing their support to the most vulnerable people in their own communities, be them minors, elderly, homeless or disabled persons. Here lies their strength, the strength of all volunteers: in their unique capacity to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable groups and improve our society by contributing to modify potentially risky lifestyles”.*  
*“Youth are here today, tomorrow and always. Thus, it’s very important to invest on them”*

Rosario Valastro  
 Italian Red Cross Youth, National President



Yeveta Milenkovic, Secretary General of the Serbian Red Cross (left), together with one of the volunteers who participated in the survey (Serbian Red Cross)

From 30 October to 1 November, 2010, in Milan, the **Second National Assembly of the Italian Red Cross Youth** was held. With the participation of over 800 among leaders and technical delegates from all the Red Cross branches in the country, as well as numerous international guests - among whom were Red Cross youth representatives from Cyprus, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark and Portugal and a member of the IFRC Youth Commission - the three-day

convention represented a crucial moment of discussion on how youth can reinforce their role as agents of change within their National Society and work more closely with their respective communities to tackle newly emerging vulnerabilities.

**New vulnerabilities, food education and climate change** will be at the heart of the action of the Italian Red Cross Youth in the immediate future: in addition to 26 training workshops held during the three day conference - on topics such as migration, new poverties, racism, STIs prevention, road safety, leadership, etc. - two national campaigns targeting the younger generations were officially launched during the Assembly, which will bring the young volunteers of the Italian Red Cross to schools, squares and other youth meeting places to raise awareness of risky behaviours and of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

“Youth can be real agents of behavioural change” concluded Rosario Valastro “This represents an important moment to reflect on the steps taken so far, be trained and plan together how we can get ready

Already in 2001, the Red Cross of Serbia felt the need to play an important role in addressing the issue of ageing population by starting the implementation of its home care programme. This programme aims at providing direct assistance to older vulnerable people who cannot count on family or immediate support.

The findings of the survey show that women are not depressed, which is opposite to previous findings derived from many different investigations on depression, in which women appeared to be at higher risk of depression, and that active volunteering can help older people reduce the risk of becoming depressed.



(Detail) One of the plenary sessions of the Second National Assembly of the Italian Red Cross Youth, held in Milan from 30 October to 1 November, 2010 / Italian Red Cross

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

to effectively tackle newly emerging vulnerabilities”.

For more information on the Assembly, click here.

### Ten steps to stop violence against children in Moldova

Understand the problem. Recognize people's vulnerability and resilience. Define protection instruments. Create a prevention team. Complete a risk assessment. Develop policies and procedures. Educate adults, youth and children. Respond to disclosures of violence. Meet the challenges. Maintain safe environments. These are ten simple steps identified by the Canadian Red Cross as key actions to prevent, reduce, mitigate and respond to interpersonal violence - be it physical, sexual and emotional – and neglect.

“Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments” is a guide for organizations and communities to help in the development, implementation and monitoring of concrete actions against violence, and it is part of **RespectED: Violence & Abuse Prevention programmes**, through which the Canadian Red Cross has successfully worked on preventing violence against children and other vulnerable groups since 1984.

“Tomorrow depends on how we protect our children today. This MoU shows how National Societies can work together on this critical issue and begin to make social change.”

Ms. Judi Fairholm  
Canadian Red Cross, Director for RespectED

Addressing violence against children, relationship violence, bullying and harassment, and help organizations create safe environments for children in their care, RespectED programmes, which have already reached millions of people in Canada, are also being implemented by other Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies in different parts of the world: on 6 December 2010, a **Memorandum of Understanding** was signed between the Canadian Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova, in order to help stopping violence against children in Moldova.

In Moldova, where the global financial crisis has only worsened the already serious economic situation of vulnerable people, widespread poverty and lack of job opportunities are critical factors for the proliferation of violence against children, who are

often subject to physical and psychological abuse at home, school and in the communities, as well as neglected or involved in housework and labour.

Such MoU, signed by **Mrs. Larisa Birca, MRCs National President**, and **Ms. Judi Fairholm, Director of RespectED** in the Canadian Red Cross, represents a historical landmark for the Moldova Red Cross in its fight against violence towards children, which has been brought forward in the country together with UNICEF.

“Violence against children is still a serious problem for most countries including Moldova. There are few official data on the true dimension of the phenomenon in our country due to low reporting rates. In this regard,

it is highly important to develop a strong capacity, enabling to respond to cases of violence and to provide children at risk of violence with necessary support and protection. That is why, we Moldova Red Cross consider the signing of the MoU with the Canadian Red Cross to be an important moment that will enable our National Society to change community attitudes and behaviour towards violence against children.”

Mrs. Larisa Birca  
Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova,  
President

The Moldova Red Cross has the intention to reinforce its programmes of prevention and education against children violence, by doing peer-education in the branches, working with youth and children, teachers, community leaders, authorities

### RED CRESCENT SOCIETY OF UZBEKISTAN ANNOUNCES NEW CHAIRMAN

*In August 2010, the General Assembly of the Uzbekistan Red Crescent elected the National Society's chairperson, Prof. Hamid Karimov, the members of financial commission, and the Presidium (national level Governing Board).*

*We took the opportunity to interview Mr. Karimov to know more about him, as well as about his plans and expectations for his National Society in the coming years.*

**Could you tell us about your previous assignments and how they contributed to your present important assignment?**

Being the Director of the National Institute of Haematology and Blood-transfusion, the question of development of non-remunerated blood donation in the Republic is one of the directions of our Institute.

The Government of the Republic adopted a programme to increase activities in this direction, so that the Republic is provided with the necessary reserve of blood.

From its side, the RCSU also started in 2006 working on reviving its activities on non-remunerated blood donation, which were carried out in cooperation with our Institute.

In the Assembly of the National Society of 2006, I was elected as a member of the National Council and the Presidium. My responsibilities included the advancement of questions related to the work of the Society with the Government.

My election as President of the Society during the General Assembly in August 2010 was a great honour for me, but also means great responsibility towards the members of my Society, the volunteers and those groups of the population who are in need and wait for help. Doing everything so that these people do not lose their hope that help will be provided and they are not alone, and also preserving and raising the image of the National Society, these are the indicators on which I would

like to evaluate my work.

**Taking into account the recent humanitarian crisis which affected Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, what kind of challenges do you think the RCSU will face in the national/international context?**

The events which took place in June 2010 in Kyrgyzstan indeed posed a serious threat of destabilising the situation in the region. For the NS this was the first experience of this kind in providing humanitarian aid. Taking into account the traditional relations of friendship among the countries of Central Asia, one clearly understands that political instability in one of the neighbouring countries could destabilise the situation in the whole region, and the events in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan are a confirmation of this.

The neighbourhood with Afghanistan, where hostilities have not ceased in the last ten years, also bears in itself a certain risk of a crisis situation to emerge.

Both in the first and in the second case we could face a problem of refugee influx on the borderlands.

While the above mentioned risks are the consequences of political questions, there are also risks and challenges which we consider as effects of environmental problems, such as the drying up of the Aral Sea, trans-border environmental problems which may lead to flooding of lands in some cases and to water deficit or drought in other cases, or to the increase in numbers of infectious diseases and other processes, irreversible to the vital functions of people, from which the most vulnerable groups suffer to a greater extent.

**What is your plan in reacting to such challenges, what kind of results are you expecting?**

For me the main result of my work is always the effective help provided. The same principle is followed in the Society.

We aim at providing assistance in the most possible operative and effective way to the people affected by any emergency, and, for this purpose, the Society stocked up some

resources, including objects of first necessity, such as tents, first aid kits, sanitation and hygiene kits, etc.

From this derives the task itself, which we face concerning the preparations for reaction – availability of necessary resources to provide help, and also training and education of staff. All my professional work is bound to medicine and therefore I am aware of the effectiveness of prophylaxis. Hence prophylactic activities are also included in the Society's plan of action on reaction to possible emergencies.

**What kind of challenges do you think could contribute to strengthening the role of your National Society in the country?**

Through the operation of providing humanitarian aid to refugees from southern Kyrgyzstan, the Society displayed its special status, distinguishing itself from other non-governmental organisations. Out of all non-governmental organisations, only the Red Crescent was able to attract international assistance with the participation of partners from within the Movement, who were acting in unity and supplementing each other.

This, in its turn, served as an additional argument in the dialogue with the Government on the necessity to adopt the Red Crescent Law and also to include the Society into the social programmes subsidised by the state.

**Do you think that the Europe Zone Office could contribute to strengthening cooperation between the RCSU and the RCSK, especially after the June events?**

Cooperation between our NSs can traditionally be characterised by friendship and partnership.

The support of the Europe Zone Office in the implementation of regional programmes and in conducting regional meetings in different areas - in the frameworks of which the possibility to exchange experience and discuss common questions would be ensured - in my opinion, will contribute to strengthening our cooperation.

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

and other stakeholders. RespectED programmes show why it is absolutely necessary that adults, children and communities change their attitudes and behaviour in relation to violence against children and, by being flexible and adaptable for local circumstances, show the way such change can be achieved.

For more information about the RespectED programmes, click [here](#).

### Red Cross marks the Hungarian Blood Donor Day

In Hungary, the **National Blood Donor Day** is celebrated every year on November 27. This year the event was held in the Upper House Hall of the Hungarian Parliament on 26 November. On the occasion, high state dignitaries, the Director General of the Hungarian National Blood Transfusion Service, the representative of IFRC Europe Zone and leaders of the Hungarian Red Cross paid honour to those who have contributed to saving human lives by donating blood, recruiting blood donors, or facilitating the organisation of blood donations at work places.

"Today we celebrate Hungarian Blood Donor Day. We use that to honour those who

istry of National Resources represented by Dr. Miklós Szócska, State Secretary of Health, gave the 20 persons who gave blood on most occasions the highest – Pro Vita – award. A male blood donor from Békés County keeps the record by donating blood on 188 occasions. The most outstanding blood donor recruiters of all County Branches received the Silver Medal for Promoting the Blood Donation Movement.

This year the first time 'Blood Donor Friendly Workplace' awards were handed over to those workplaces, which excelled in facilitating blood drives. The award ceremony in the Parliament was completed by the performance of popular actors and singers.

In November, more than 170 blood donor celebrations were held all over Hungary to express gratitude for the selfless help of 50,000 voluntary blood donors.

### Opening the door: the experience of the Irish Red Cross

First aid can become an entry point towards developing people's trust and clearing a path to more sensitive issues. In Ireland, a community-based health and

first-aid programme was introduced in 2009 in Dublin's **Wheatfield prison**, a medium- to high-security facility and home to 450 male prisoners, many of whom are long-term inmates. The project, a partnership between the Irish Red Cross, the prison's healthcare division and the city of Dublin's vocational education committee, started as a way to avoid bringing the H1N1 epidemic into the penitentiary.

Twelve prisoners were chosen to participate as Red Cross volunteers and receive first-aid education with relevant health awareness. They took classes two hours a week, then passed on what they had learned to the rest of the prisoners. It seemed to work: a neighbouring prison had several cases of swine flu, but there was not a single one at Wheatfield.

But Graham Betts-Symonds, the prison's healthcare and nursing manager, was most struck by the transformation in the volunteers who participated. "While some [prisoners] had behavioural difficulties in the past, they appear to have completely changed as Red Cross volunteers," he says. Perhaps the most impressive result was the response to a mass HIV testing project in June 2010, after first-aid courses highlighted HIV awareness as a key health

issue. In the days leading up to the tests, the volunteers passed out leaflets, encouraged other prisoners to go and talked openly about the virus. The turnout exceeded all expectations.

A survey was held during the tests and the prison-

### Extending the Global Alliance on HIV in the Europe Zone

Following the letter on the Global Alliance on HIV sent by the Director of the Europe Zone to the National Societies on 25 October, 2010, and also distributed by ERNA to NS technical coordinator, 11 National Societies in the Europe Zone expressed their interest to join the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV.

So far, the following NSs have presented their interest to work on 4 year HIV plans:

Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Macedonia.

The Global Alliance on HIV was launched by the IFRC on World AIDS Day 2006. It represented the Federation's collective worldwide commitment to do more and to do better to reduce vulnerability to HIV and its impact. The work is done by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in support of their National HIV/AIDS programmes, and in cooperation with many

partners. The IFRC undertakes direct action at community and family level and advocate on behalf of the most marginalised and stigmatised groups. Mobilising the capacities of people living with HIV and tackling gender inequality are at the heart of the strategy of the Global Alliance on HIV.

Red Cross Red Crescent Societies interested to join the Global Alliance should use the RCRC Global Alliance on HIV Programme Manual, in order to create and/or update their plans.

The manual can be found [here](#).

have given the most" said **Tore Svenning, Special Adviser in the IFRC Europe Zone Office** in his speech.

"World Blood Donor Day was marked in Barcelona last June, under the slogan 'New Blood for the World' – the 'new' meaning new donors, young donors.

"The need for blood is increasing in all parts of the world. Young people can make an important contribution by donating blood and by recruiting other young people, and your example should be their inspiration".

On the proposal of the National Blood Transfusion Service, the Hungarian Min-



(From left to right): János Major, Blood donation officer in the Hungarian Red Cross, Georg Habbburg, President of the Hungarian Red Cross and Eszter Miskovits, Director General of the Hungarian National Blood Transfusion Service, while awarding blood donors during the ceremony held in the Hungarian Parliament for the National Blood Donor Day, 27 November, 2010 / Hungarian Red Cross

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

ers' responses proved that, without peer support, many would not have bothered showing up.

"If medical people came around, prisoners would go back into cells," wrote one. "RC guys 1,000 per cent better doing this than staff doing it," noted another.

"Makes you more on the ball about HIV/AIDS, especially about unprotected sex," said a third.

And one prisoner wrote: "Thank God it's being done".

### Belarusian Red Cross holds conference on medical-social care provision to the population

On 2 November, 2010, the national scientific-practical conference "Topical issues of medical and social care provision to the population" took place in Minsk, Belarus. The Conference was organized by the Belarusian Red Cross society (BRC) and the Belarusian Medical Academy of post-graduate education (BelMAPO) in compliance with the activity plan of the Health Ministry of Belarus.

The Conference was implemented within the framework of the joint project of the BRC and the Red Cross of Switzerland, Germany and Austria, targeting the strengthening of the BRC Visiting Nurse Service (VNS), which provides home-based medical-social care to the lonely and living alone elderly people and the disabled, through raising the professionalism of the visiting nurses, widening the scope of cooperation with the organization providing medico-social care, and attracting volunteers and partnership structures.

The Conference represented an important occasion for the participants to exchange experiences, provide new information and commit to continue working on the improvement of medical and social care provision to the population, emphasise the high potential of the BRC Visiting Nurse Service experience in medical and social care provision, and facilitate its

further development on the basis of the cooperation between the Health Ministry, the Ministry of Labour and the Belarus Red Cross.

The Conference materials can be found on the Belarusian Red Cross website.

### Turkmenistan Red Crescent intensifies efforts against TB

A programme of the Turkmenistan Red Crescent Society on Tuberculosis prevention has trained staff and volunteers who help raise general awareness of this disease.

Seminars, trainings, talks and public actions aimed at information distribution to cover population of different ages in Ashgabat, the capital, and in regions of the country. Thanks to the efforts of the Red Crescent volunteers, more and more people get to know how they can themselves avoid the risk of such a serious disease.

For detection and cure of TB, in Turkmenistan DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short-course) is used, an internationally recommended strategy thanks to which patients are considered healed within six to nine months. As part of the National Society's efforts to assist the Government in tackling the TB problem, Red Crescent visiting nurses provide home care to the patients, by bringing medications to their places when needed, administering doses and accompanying them to TB treatment visits. Patients undergoing continuous treatment also get social assistance on a monthly basis and receive food parcels for a period of four to five months, which is an additional boost for them to complete the treatment. The number of cured people who have been under

the patronage of the Red Crescent visiting nurses is constantly increasing. Upon the recommendation of nurses and volunteers of the National Society, many people visit doctors for lung screening, which represents a good chance of early diagnosis. Myahri, a 40 y.o. visiting nurse from Ashgabat, has had tuberculosis twice: the first time when she was a child and then at the age of 33 when she worked in a clinic. "I was really depressed but the Red Crescent helped me to finish my treatment and after recovery I joined the Red Crescent to try to help people with TB to find a hope" says Myahri "I volunteered for one year. Now I am working as a visiting nurse for TB patients, which also gives me the opportunity to talk to them and help them find inspiration through my own experience."

### In memory of Hans Høegh

**Hans Høegh**, former Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, died at the age of 84. With a lifetime of humanitarian activity at local, national and international levels, he should be recognized as one of our most active and enthusiastic promoters of Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and values.

Beginning in 1957, he managed many humanitarian projects for the Norwegian Red Cross. In the late 60's, as Chairman of Norwegian Red Cross Youth, he initiated a campaign in which school children were encouraged to sell their drawings to family and friends. The money was used to create three Red Cross 'camp schools' in Norway which integrated disabled children with non-disabled. Mr Høegh's purpose was to show that all people are equal. He was elected President of the Norwegian Red Cross in 1975, a post which he held for the next six years.

He was Secretary General of the IFRC from 1982 to 1988. His legacy includes grouping relief and development specialists in common geographical departments.

He is largely responsible for the introduction of computerized accounting, the establishment of a training unit, and the development of a much-improved pension scheme for staff.

His major initiative as secretary general was in the field of community health, with a focus on saving millions of children from fatal diarrhoeal disease. In partnership with WHO and UNICEF, he created a programme called Child Alive to spread messages on breastfeeding, good nutrition, personal hygiene, immunization and oral rehydration therapy. "Diarrhoea is so mundane, so familiar, so universal, that it is hard for many people to recognize it as the killer it is when it teams up with malnutrition and childhood diseases," he told the League's General Assembly in October 1983.

From 1988 to 1993 Hans Høegh served as Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

His last humanitarian project was the creation of A Better Life Foundation in 2000. Its aim is to improve the lives of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people: the disabled, the elderly, the homeless and the marginalized. The Foundation also provides schooling for disabled children and runs community health programmes.

Funeral services were held on Monday 8 November, in Norway. The IFRC is close to Mr. Høegh's family and to the Norwegian Red Cross in this sad moment.

### In memory of Alistair Henley

**Alistair Henley**, Director of the Asia Pacific zone, passed away on 14 November, 2010, in Kuala Lumpur.

Alistair started his career at the British Red Cross and was seconded to the League of Red Cross Societies – as the IFRC was then known – in October 1980 to be part of its Eastern Africa Task force. From 1981 to 1986, he worked as desk

officer for the Asia Pacific and Africa department. He was appointed head of regional delegation in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1989 and came back to Geneva in 1993 to work at the Office of the Secretary General as funding coordinator.

Alistair was then appointed director of cooperation and development in 1995 and head of the coordination department in 2000.

He became head of Beijing regional delegation in 2003 and was appointed head

of Asia Pacific zone office in May 2007, becoming its director in August 2009.

Alistair had amassed outstanding institutional knowledge during his long Red Cross Red Crescent career, and would use it to find creative solutions to the challenges he faced. He cared deeply about his team members and his colleagues. The Red Cross Red Crescent lost one of its most knowledgeable and conscientious leaders, and we lost one of our dearest friends.

## RESOURCE MOBILISATION

### Development Programmes 2010 Donor response - end of November '10

### Active Emergency appeals (2010) - Europe & Central Asia Donor response in cash, kind and services

APPEAL	APPEAL TITLE	ANNUAL BUDGET	TOTAL FUNDING	% FUND / BUDGET
MAA65001	Europe Zone	2,339,486	2,006,008	86%
MAA67002	Chernobyl humanitarian assistance & rehabilitation	512,163	477,692	93%
MAAAL002	Albania	77,706	43,000	55%
MAAAM002	Armenia	350,548	324,296	93%
MAAAZ002	Azerbaijan	669,856	510,921	76%
MAABA002	Bosnia and Herzegovina	435,242	335,905	77%
MAABY002	Belarus	1,673,018	1,221,876	73%
MAAGE002	Georgia	954,513	636,435	67%
MSSKG001	Kyrgyzstan	1,225,826	1,050,645	86%
MAAKV001	Kosovo	585,962	651,386	111%
MAAKZ001	Kazakhstan	1,911,609	1,692,892	89%
MAAMD002	Moldova	196,706	178,078	91%
MAAME001	Montenegro	75,000	9,150	12%
MAAMK002	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	65,808	43,000	65%
MAARO001	Romania	74,385	0	0%
MAARS001	Serbia	754,722	1,254,911	166%
MAARU002	Russian Federation	4,361,263	6,365,300	146%
MAATJ002	Tajikistan	1,779,518	1,679,475	94%
MAATM001	Turkmenistan	1,332,501	748,843	56%
MAAUA002	Ukraine	337,985	223,093	66%
MAAUZ001	Uzbekistan	1,325,875	535,028	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>21,039,691</b>	<b>19,987,932</b>	<b>95%</b>

CODE	APPEAL TITLE	BUDGET	FUNDING	COV.
MDRTJ005	Tajikistan - Mudslides and floods	892,624	812,327	91%
MDRUZ002	Uzbekistan - Population Movement	1,116,159	1,154,594	99%
MDRKG007	Kyrgyzstan - Civil Unrest	965,069	275,234	29%
MDRRS004	Serbia - Earthquake	409,759	78,032	19%
	<b>Subtotal Europe &amp; Central Asia</b>	<b>3,433,611</b>	<b>2,320,188</b>	<b>68%</b>

### STAFF CHANGES

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

Zlatko	KOVAC	Senior Advisor/Country Representative for Belarus and Ukraine
Gyula	KÁDÁR	Regional Representative (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)
Lourdes	PEREZ	Resource Mobilisation Coordinator (Europe Zone Office)

#### Farewell to colleagues:

Zlatko	KOVAC	Avian and Human Influenza Coordinator (Europe Zone Office)
Gulsine	SEYMEN	Finance Manager (Europe Zone Office)
Zarema	YERZHANOVA	Resource Mobilisation Advisor (Europe Zone Office)
Drina	KARAHASANOVIC	Regional Representative (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)
Jaap	TIMMER	Regional Representative (Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine)
Gyula	KÁDÁR	Senior Advisor for Uzbekistan

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For more information, or to suggest an item for a future issue, click here.