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#02

Europe Zone

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



August Bergström / Swedish Red Cross

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A Swedish Red Cross volunteer together with an elderly woman. The Swedish Red Cross provides active support to elderly, sick and people with disabilities who are in need of assistance. Volunteers and staff make house visits, help with household chores, take walks and other leisure activities, or accompany them to appointments. They also volunteer in hospitals and rest homes.

Vienna Commitments: how far have we come?

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 International Federation
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Editorial

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Dear friends,
Two years ago, in April 2010, 42 National Societies in the Europe Zone met at the European Conference in Vienna to discuss about ageing populations and multicultural interaction, which were identified as two major humanitarian priorities for Europe and Central Asia.

With two years left until the next European Conference, the time has come for us to take stock of how far we've reached our commitments and to see what road lies ahead.

Due to the events that occurred across the Mediterranean basin in the last year, which brought thousands of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East onto European shores, European governments have been rethinking their approach to diversity, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and integration, in order to tackle newly emerging challenges in a changing Europe. So have our National Societies, which have been strengthening their action targeted at migrant people, and working on ensuring better diversity of their own volunteers, staff and leadership to reflect the changing composition of the population in their countries.

At the same time, the recently commenced 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations has come as a strong reminder of the reality of another growing phenomenon in Europe: that of an increasingly older population. This confronts our societies with complex challenges and raises questions concerning the active role of older people within the social system, their participation in the society, their quality of life and their well-being, their autonomy as well as the interdependence and communication between generations.

There are many examples of National Societies that have successfully undertaken changes aimed at reviewing their internal structure, adapting their programmes and broadening their range and reach. These changes advocate for emerging vulnerabilities and new humanitarian needs, as well as a change in mindsets.

Some others have only recently embarked on this process.

For some years now, the Red Cross has run the Clubs of Generations in Romania. These community development activities use a participatory development approach, whose goal is to empower elderly people, provoking a change in themselves first, and then in the others. Training can help older people combat the long-lasting stereotype of the elderly as a burden, and allow them to think of themselves as active citizens who can still have a role in society, improving their own lives and others.

In Bulgaria, the Red Cross runs a Refugee Migrant Service, which works with asylum seekers and refugees. Volunteers, the majority of whom are refugees themselves, encourage the successful integration of the newly arrived, and actively support numerous refugee clubs, promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

These are successful examples of how National Societies have managed to align their plans to Strategy 2020 and to the commitments taken in Vienna, adapting their priorities to the newly-identified trends and challenges. However, the way ahead remains long.

There are still many countries in which the concept of active ageing is slow to take root, and many others where xenophobia and discrimination still hinder the social integration of migrant people.

Change must start from within. As stated in the Vienna Commitments, "we will involve those we serve in all our activities". By involving senior citizens in voluntary work, by empowering migrant people to grow from beneficiaries of our programmes, to well-adjusted, responsible, and caring members of the communities they inhabit, National Societies can start the process of change that is needed in our societies, bringing us closer every day to the communities we serve.

Anitta Underlin
Director of Europe Zone

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Responding to emergencies

Tajikistan faces record disaster year

During the first three months of 2012 alone, Tajikistan has witnessed more than **150 natural disasters** – floods, earthquakes, avalanches, as well as snowfalls and extremely low temperatures. According to the preliminary assessment made by the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of Tajikistan, natural disasters left over 6,000 people without homes or heavily damaged houses in the country. Severe climate conditions also had negative consequences on food security in the country, as remoteness and the blocked roads reduced people's access to food and hampered the provision of social and medical assistance to the population, especially vulnerable groups.

The IFRC has allocated **DREF funds** to support the Tajik Red Crescent in delivering immediate food assistance to vulnerable households in need in Murghob district, eastern Tajikistan, as well as to replenish the National Society's emergency stocks. Under the first DREF, vulnerable female-headed and multi-children families, as well as elderly living alone (in total 500 families - more than 20% of Murghob district population) will be provided with supplementary food over a period of four months. The targeted groups of the population are receiving wheat flour, vegetable oil, sugar and tea to meet the minimum ratio of basic food need. Some 156 additional households throughout the country are receiving humanitarian aid under the second DREF.



A Tajik family in Murghob district, eastern Tajikistan, among approximately 500 households that are benefiting from the food distribution carried out by the Tajik Red Crescent, following the deterioration of food security in the country during the last months.

DRR mapping: increasing investments in disaster risk reduction

In 2009, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies established an annual mapping process to highlight its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities, support better programming and ultimately promote more strategic investments in DRR.

This mapping focuses on activities specifically categorized as community-based DRR (including Community Based Development Programme - CBDP), climate change adaptation and mitigation, food security, nutrition and livelihoods, and National Society disaster preparedness.

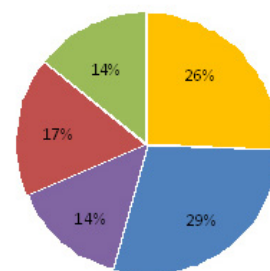
Data provided by **122 National Societies**, including 23 PNSs, show that in 2011 the Red Cross Red Crescent spent approximately CHF 95.3 million on DRR activities, reaching over 20.3 million vulnerable people across 97 countries. Since 2009, Red Cross Red Crescent investment in DRR activities has increased steadily by CHF 27.2 million. The number of vulnerable people reached through DRR activities has increased from 13.5 million to 20.3 million, an average of 2.2 million per year. DRR programming cost approximately CHF 4.69 per person in 2011.

In Europe, the Red Cross Red Crescent spent approximately **CHF 9.6 million** on DRR activities, reaching around **2 million vulnerable people**.

The way forward in DRR will see the Red Cross Red Crescent continuing to deliver cost-effective service (currently the cost per person is CHF 4.69, compared to CHF 5 in 2010) and to develop new partnerships with the corporate sector and governments to explore new funding opportunities.

Focus Area
Community-Based DRR (including CBDP)
Climate Change Adaptation
Climate Change Mitigation
Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods
National Society Disaster Preparedness

Expenditure in focus areas



	2009	2010	2011
Africa	38%	24%	25%
America	15%	19%	12%
Asia Pacific	41%	44%	52%
Europe	5%	11%	10%
MENA	1%	2%	<1%

Variances in regional breakdown of global DRR spending by region between 2009 and 2011. In 2011 Europe experienced moderate variations in spending.

Responding to emergencies



Pilis Rescue Team members during the National Qualifying Training held in the region of Zsámbék and Pilisvörösvár, Hungary between 27 and 29 March, 2012.

First National Qualifying Training of the Pilis Rescue Team takes place in Hungary

Screams for help come from under the ruins...the three rescue dogs are ready to save the wounded trapped after a devastating gas explosion. Water passing through the doorway, sandbags, and desperate people...a rescue boat arrives, scuba divers at work, relief items: pictures of a devastating flooding.

Fortunately, these are just snapshots of the first National Qualifying Training of the Pilis Rescue Team, held between 27 and 29 March, 2012 in the region of Zsámbék and Pilisvörösvár, Hungary, which saw the participation of the Hungarian Red Cross, among others. From the Europe Zone Office, the event was attended by Alberto Monguzzi, Acting DM Coordinator, and Giovanni Zambello, Communications delegate.

In line with the standards of the new international Disaster Management System, Hungary hosted the first ever national qualifying training has been organized for civilian rescue teams. After an exhausting 56-hour-long training through realistic disaster scenarios, the 73-person Pilis Rescue Team – composed of staff from the Pest County Search and Rescue Service, the Volunteer Fire Department of Pilisvörösvár and the Hungarian Red Cross - successfully completed the training. The organizers set up a series of real life emergency situations, such as gas explosions, floods and mass panic-caused disasters, which put the professionalism of the rescue team to the test in five significant areas: search and rescue, technical rescue, scuba and water rescue, first aid and psychosocial support.

Red Cross in Belarus and Ukraine sign partnerships with Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company and the IFRC have formed a global partnership to enhance their collaboration on disaster preparedness and response and public engagement around the world. Together with bottler partners of the Coca-Cola System, The Coca-Cola Company and the Red Cross Red Crescent already work together in over 50 countries, assisting communities struck by disaster. The Coca Cola Foundation has contributed USD 1 million to support the IFRC's DREF. Funds from the DREF provide immediate start-up funding for response to all types of disasters, but are mainly allocated to "small-scale" disasters – those that do not give rise to a formal international appeal.

Coca-Cola Beverages Ukraine, in partnership with the **Red Cross Society of Ukraine**, acted swiftly to assist thousands of people at risk from the extreme cold weather which swept across the country last February. The united effort came just weeks after the two parties signed an agreement aimed at sharing resources and assisting the health and welfare needs of Ukrainians, especially in emergency situations. In facing the threat from cold temperatures, emergency measures were introduced within the first hours and continued as temperatures plunged to minus 30 C, causing power supply failures, as well as school and business closures. The Coca-Cola Foundation provided 50,000 UAH (58,000 CHF) in cash to support the work of the Ukraine Red Cross through the DREF. Furthermore Coca-Cola Beverages Ukraine arranged deliveries of more than 4,000 litres of drinking water and juice to rescue sites, as well as medical and social service centres.

On 1 March 2012, a cooperation agreement was also signed between Coca-Cola Beverages Belarus and the **Belarusian Red Cross**.

Vienna Commitments

Focus on the mid-term evaluation

On 13 April 2010, 42 National Societies met in Vienna, Austria for the 8th European Regional Conference (13-16 April 2010) to discuss two main themes -Ageing Population in Europe and Multicultural Interaction. The aim of the Conference is to help set up benchmarks for the humanitarian challenges that exist in Europe and Central Asia and create a four year plan to address these challenges.



The Conference resulted in the Vienna Commitments.

We recognise that ageing populations and growing multicultural diversity constitute common challenges and opportunities throughout Europe. We, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Europe region, therefore make the following commitments:

1. We will align our National Society strategies and plans to our global Strategy 2020. In order to do more, do better and reach further we will strengthen our capacities, enhance our accountability, develop guidance and share best practices. We will use our privileged role as auxiliaries to draw attention to the needs of the most vulnerable, and will pursue active humanitarian diplomacy to give voice to the voiceless. We will involve those we serve in all our activities, and will promote effective cooperation with external partners at all levels.

2. We hold ourselves accountable, and will report regularly on our progress with regard to the commitments below. We will be measured by our action, not our words.

AGEING IN EUROPE

3. We will contribute to building a positive image of ageing and will recognize older people as an important resource for society

Case study: Azerbaijan. "Senior volunteers bring their skills in tracing and health activities"

4. We aim for self-empowerment of older people and will encourage active ageing, strengthening their resilience and allowing them to remain autonomous. We will encourage active ageing, and will highlight to our governments the strong evidence that it reduces the vulnerability of older people. We will advocate for the inclusion of older people in economic, social and cultural life, and for life-long learning. We will promote their active participation as volunteers in our own activities and decision-making.

Case study: Romania. "Active ageing: are we ready for change?"

5. We will advocate at all levels for the public provision of, and access to adequate services for older people, such as proper living and housing conditions, appropriate health and social care and nursing-in accordance with human dignity and relevant standards. We will actively tackle and prevent any mistreatment and abuse.

Case study: Belarus. "Strengthening the Red Cross Visiting Nurses Service"

6. We will develop sustainable services and activities at grassroots level to promote the physical, social and mental well-being of older people. We will recruit and train volunteers to provide assistance and support to those most in need and their

Progress on the Vienna Commitments

In spring 2011, one year after the 8th European Conference, a self-assessment questionnaire on the implementation of the Vienna Commitments was sent out to National Societies in the Europe Zone. Aimed at monitoring the progress being made at national level towards the agreed goals in the areas of ageing populations and intercultural interaction, the questionnaire asks National Societies to rate their own performance in relations to the alignment to Strategy 2020, promotion of positive image of older people, their inclusion in the economic, social and cultural life, the reflection of the population's diversity in volunteers, staff and leadership, etc.

Ranging on a scale from 1 (lowest = poor) to 6 (highest = excellent), self-assessment scores were not linked to defined indicators, which made the questionnaire more of a flexible checklist than a classical evaluation tool, and it was left to the respondent National Societies to specify the criteria according which they would make their assessment.

When the Implementation Support Group decided, back in November 2010, to the launch of an electronic questionnaire, no logframe was developed, and no indicators were defined as a central guidance for the evaluation. This way, the questionnaire is more of a flexible checklist than a classical evaluation tool, and it was left to the respondent National Societies to specify the criteria according which they would make their assessment.

IN FIGURES

36 National Societies had responded by 1 March 2012.

14 National Societies self-assessed their performance as excellent (6) in at least one item

2 National Societies self-assessed their performance as poor (1) in at least one item

The responses tend to range around the scores of 3 and 4 as an average, which reflects the realities of our work: much has been done, and much is still left to be done.

Vienna Commitments

Focus on the mid-term evaluation



caregivers. We will consider the specific needs of older people in the design of all our programmes.

Case studies: Austria and Serbia. "Volunteers training to prevent domestic violence and abuse against older people"

7. We will strengthen solidarity between younger and older people to mutual benefit, and will actively promote intergenerational dialogue and cooperation. We recognize the growing diversity of older people in our communities, and will adapt our services and communication tools accordingly.

Case study: Montenegro. "Promoting dialogue and social inclusion in south-eastern Europe"

DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

8. We will lead by example, and will undertake specific and targeted action leading to better diversity of volunteers and staff and leadership within our own organisations, adequately reflecting the changing composition of our populations. We thereby also ensure better access to vulnerable communities. We will also draw on our global network of National Societies to reach out to migrants.

Case study: Austria. "Integration through volunteering"

In 2009, the Austrian Red Cross started an EU-funded pilot research project targeting young resident Muslims in Austria, which aimed at identifying the reasons why there are so few Muslims among the Austrian Red Cross volunteers, and using the outcomes as a starting step for integration and advocacy.

9. We will promote an inclusive culture in which all individuals are encouraged to participate fully, based on our fundamental principles. We respect and value highly the diversity of the communities we work with and of our volunteers, members and staff. We recognise that different people contribute with different perspectives, ideas, opinions, histories, knowledge and culture, and that these differences bring great strength. We will take action against behaviour and discriminatory practice which is not in line with our humanitarian values.

Case study: "Central Asian Red Crescent Labour Migration Network"

In 2009, the IFRC Federation and four National Societies of Central Asia, with the support of the European Commission, started a labour migration project with the goal to improve the situation of labour migrants in the region, regardless of their legal status, and to build cooperation between the National Societies. Covering both countries of origin – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and country of destination/transit – Kazakhstan – the project works in four areas: protection, advocacy, integration/reintegration, and humanitarian assistance.

10. We will promote intercultural dialogue within our own National Societies and in the communities we serve, and we acknowledge the specific contribution that young people can make in this regard. We recognize that people and groups have many different identities and needs. We will adapt our programmes to better meet the needs of people we want to reach. We will train our volunteers and staff to fully respect diversity in their daily work.

Case study: Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the Red Cross Youth is active in regions with large Turkish communities, with many youngsters of Turkish origins having now joined the Red Cross. The youth organization is also developing different projects especially targeting ethnic majority youth, in order to promote tolerance and social inclusion of various minority groups who may face exclusion or discrimination.

Past and future events

International Women's Day: combating gender-based violence, promoting non-discrimination

"Gender-based violence and discrimination are one of the big challenges facing today's society. The Italian Red Cross is trying to raise awareness and tackle these issues by promoting a culture of respect for diversity and non-violence, as stated in our [Strategic Objectives for 2020](#)" commented Francesco Rocca, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Italian Red Cross, at the opening of the workshop "Different genders, same victims. Combating gender-based violence, promoting non-discrimination", held in Rome on 7 March, the eve of the International Women's Day. "Today is just one of those times when we speak out on behalf of those who every day face abuse, violence or discrimination because of their gender or sexual orientation."



Osh, Kyrgyzstan, September 2009. Gulbaar village Salamat, 29, victim of unregistered marriage and new beneficiary of the Kyrgyz Red Crescent, and her daughter Bakktygul 3.5. In Kyrgyzstan, where up to 75% of marriages take place as a result of bride kidnapping, a joint Kyrgyz Red Crescent/British Red Cross programme works on improving the social and economic position of almost 50,000 vulnerable women, providing them with vocational and life skills, and informing them of their rights, such as access to social and health services.

Related materials:

[Leaflet](#) / "Different Genders, same victims"

[Editorial](#) / International Women's Day: ending violence must start from the community

[Video](#) / Kyrgyzstan Women's Programme: "Hope is a gift for me"

[Strategy](#) / Violence prevention, mitigation and response, 2011-2020

Hosted by the **Italian Red Cross**, the event saw the participation of volunteers, local authorities, members of parliaments, academics and physicians to offer a multi-disciplinary insight on what represents an extremely pervasive issue in many countries around the world. The IFRC was represented by Sandra Gutierrez, from the Principles and Values Department in Geneva, and Lourdes Perez, member of the

Red Cross Red Crescent Women's Network.

In November 2011, the Federation launched a Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response for 2011-2020, where it highlights the duty and responsibility of National Societies and the IFRC to respond to episodes of violence, many of which are perpetrated on women, girls and LGBT people, and to work on its prevention.

Kazakh Red Crescent holds its XVIII General Assembly

On 5 April 2012, the XVIII General Assembly of the Kazakh Red Crescent took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The main purposes of the General Assembly – which saw the participation of over 100 people, including the National Society's management at all levels, representatives of Ministries, international organisations and partner National Societies - were the adoption of an updated version of the National Society's Charter and its Strategy for 2012-2020, the presentation of a report



Participants of the Kazakh Red Crescent General Assembly, during one of its voting sessions.

Past and future events

on the achievements of the Kazakh Red Crescent for the period 2007-2011, and the elections of the President, Vice Presidents and collegial governance bodies of the organization.

Upcoming events:

World Malaria Day (25 April)

World Red Cross Red Crescent Day (8 May)

World Day for Cultural Diversity and for Dialogue and Development (21 May)

Regional Conference on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (24-26 May, 2012, Riga, Latvia)

The Congress also presented an opportunity to discuss the draft **Red Crescent Law** – which would define the Kazakh Red Crescent's special legal status and its auxiliary role to public authorities - as well as its promotion and adoption before legislative bodies.

One of the major changes in the Charter is a new approach to attract members of the Red Crescent Society, namely the introduction of collective membership, in addition to individual membership. "Now the Society is supported by approximately 250,000 members" says Mr. Argymbaev Y.K., President of the Kazakh Red Crescent. "We are planning to attract millions of members, individually and collectively. The right of a Red Crescent member is to elect and to be elected to the collegial bodies of the management, defining the strategy and policy of the organization. Moreover, the annual payment of a membership fee, and its low cost, will allow anyone to join and to continue to be part of our organization".



Anitta Underlin, Director of Europe Zone, during her meeting with the Secretary General of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS in Saint Petersburg, Russia, February 2012.

IFRC meets the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of CIS in Saint Petersburg

On 17 February 2012, in the Headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) in St. Petersburg, Russia, representatives of IFRC and Russian Red Cross, led by the Director of the Europe Zone, Anitta Underlin, had an official meeting with the Secretary General of the Assembly, Alexey Sergeev. The meeting aimed at discussing the possible directions of mutual cooperation as well as the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding between IPA CIS and IFRC.

Ms. Underlin informed the participants that, in 2011, the IFRC Governing Board decided to treat Russian as a working language.

This is planned to be done in a step by step approach, subject to available resources, and addressing first the statutory meetings, then relevant publications including web-based documents, and finally the Council of Delegates and the International Conference.

Within the possible cooperation framework, the development of a model Red Cross law for the National Societies of CIS, as well as legislative acts on trans-border cooperation in disaster situations, can emerge as the main priorities. One possibility would see the IFRC initiating the development of such laws, which would be discussed in IPA CIS and then recommended to the National parliaments of the nine CIS countries. IFRC and IPA CIS expressed mutual satisfaction with the results of the meeting and agreed to sign the MoU in May 2012.

News from National Societies

UEFA EURO 2012: paddling down the Danube towards Ukraine

On 1 March 2012, a Norwegian man named Bjørn Heidenstrøm started his journey from the Swiss city of Basel on the Rhine, paddling south to the Danube River, through 10 countries, towards the Black Sea. His final destination will be Kiev, Ukraine and the **European Football Championship** this summer, where he should arrive by 8th of June. Along the way he is fundraising as well as raising awareness of the Red Cross, specifically of its Tracing Service and the thousands of people who are missing their loved ones. He is also fundraising for the same purpose.

This tour of the Danube is the third time that Heidenstrøm is completing such a long trip for his project **"The Shirt"**. The previous journey was round trip from Norway to South Africa for 2012 FIFA World Cup. During these trips, he gathered football t-shirts from local and national team players, in order to sew them together into the world's largest football t-shirt.

If you are interested in following this up with your local branches, here is Bjørn's [blog](#) dedicated to this journey.

Follow Bjørn on Twitter [@heidenstrom](#).

Tajik Red Crescent and Chinese Red Cross enhance cooperation

On 12 March 2012 in Beijing, China, during the official visit of the delegation of Tajikistan, the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan and Red Cross Society of China signed an agreement of friendly cooperation. The agreement was signed by Dr. Zhao Baige, Executive Vice-President of Chinese Red Cross and Mr. Zafar Muhabbatov, Tajikistan Red Crescent Secretary General. The purpose of the agreement is to further develop and enhance the cooperation between the two National Societies in the fields of information exchange, bilateral exchanges and communication, capacity building, humanitarian assistance and cooperative programmes.

"The cooperation with the Chinese Red Cross will create the possibility to expand the activities of the Tajik Red Crescent and strengthen its capacity to assist people in need," said Eric Michel-Sellier, IFRC Country Representative in Tajikistan. "The IFRC, in its turn, is always ready to support the Tajik Red Crescent in its efforts to search for new opportunities to assist people in need and in strengthening its capacity".



Agreement signing ceremony between the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan and Red Cross Society of China, during the delegation of Tajikistan's official visit to China.

Bulgaria introduces the Swiss model for integrated medical and social home care

A press-conference organized on 18 January 2012 at the Bulgarian Red Cross Headquarters announced the start of the project *"Home care for an independent and dignified life"*. As a joint initiative of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Bulgarian Ministry of Health and the Swiss Red Cross, the project aims, for the first time in Bulgaria, to institutionalize and validate a model for complex provision of home medical care and social services for older people, people with chronic diseases and with permanent disabilities. As a result of an agreement signed under the "Reform Fund linked to the inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups concerning Home Care Services Activity", the project will also recognise the specific needs of the Roma population in terms of home care services provision. Four Home care centres will be opened in the region of Vratsa in Bulgaria, where 50 persons - nurses and home helps, including representatives of the Roma

News from National Societies

community - will be trained and employed. By providing Roma people with specific training and employment opportunities, the training programme will also facilitate their social integration in the host communities in the region.



Raisa Lukutsova, President of the Russian Red Cross, together with Sergey Shoigu, Minister of EMERCOM, during the awarding ceremony of the Golden Heart.

Russian Red Cross awards the Golden Heart to the Minister of EMERCOM

On 16 March 2012, the Russian Minister of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), Sergey Shoigu, was awarded the Russian Red Cross Medal "Golden Heart".

In her speech during the awarding ceremony, the President of the Russian Red Cross Society, Raisa Lukutsova, praised the good cooperation between the Russian Red Cross and EMERCOM in disaster preparedness and response, reducing the vulnerability of communities.

According to Mr. Shoigu, during the last 10 years EMERCOM provided emergency response services in more than 500 international disasters and in the near future plans to increase its participation in international humanitarian actions jointly with the Red Cross Red Crescent.

Interview:



Uldis Likops is the Secretary General of the Latvian Red Cross. In May 2012, the Latvian Red Cross will be hosting a regional Conference on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

From 24 to 26 May 2012, the Latvian Red Cross will be hosting a regional conference on the topic of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, which is also the theme of the current European Year. How relevant are these topics for Latvia and the greater Baltic region and why?

The Latvian society, the Baltic region and the whole of Europe are getting older – that is the reality we face. In the last years, the Latvian Red Cross has worked very much towards the development of programmes promoting active ageing and solidarity between generations. We are living longer and healthier lives than ever before, so the crucial point is not the fact that we grow old but how we do

it – sad, forgotten and regretful, or active, ready to experience new things and to live whole-heartedly? Understanding, adopting and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle throughout one's life – also in older age – allows people to realize their full potential and well-being and to fully participate in society.

The regional conference that we are going to host in Latvia next month will prove a good opportunity to discuss the topic of Active Ageing, the Red Cross role in its promotion, and to share experiences and good practices among each other.

According to the World Bank, Latvia has one of the world's oldest populations, with 18% of the population being over 65 years old. Besides, the country's ability to support the old took a big hit during the 2009 financial crisis, when its economy suffered among the deepest recessions in the EU. Where does the Latvian Red Cross position itself in this scenario and which are its priorities in relation to ageing?

The priorities of the Latvian Red Cross were indeed affected by the global economic downturn. Enabling older people to be autonomous and independent is one of our key goals; therefore the Latvian Red Cross is trying to engage older people in our programmes, enhancing their potential and providing them with adequate protection and support when they need it.

Through its network of volunteers, the Latvian Red Cross is assisting lonely elderly people in their daily activities, providing first aid training, and ensuring home care and health promotion services. Youth volunteers are particularly active, organising various social events and activities for and together with seniors.

One of the commitments made in Vienna at the last European Conference was indeed related to ageing populations in Europe. What progress has been made by the Latvian Red Cross in meeting these commitments and how do you think multilateral cooperation in your region can help you in this process?

Although a lot has been done by the Latvian Red Cross to train and organise volunteers for physical, psychological and social assistance to older people and to promote intergenerational dialogue, there is still a lot to strive for.

We are strongly engaged in promoting the self-empowerment and active participation of older people in society. But we also want to strengthen our advocacy work to enable older people to be more included in the economic and social life, as well as in decision-making processes at local and national level.

By inviting neighbouring National Societies to this conference, we are aiming to strengthen our capacities, develop guidance and share best practices, thus giving valuable inputs to local communities and making the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement every day closer to the people we serve.

Resource mobilisation

Development Programmes 2012, Donor response

Europe & Central Asia

Code	Programme title	Budget	Funding	Coverage
MAA65001	Europe Zone	1,577,112	2,328,454	148%
MAABA002	Bosnia and Herzegovina	392,879	359,219	91%
MAAKV001	Kosovo	642,649	369,386	57%
MAAME001	Montenegro	15,000	348	2%
MAARS001	Serbia	367,151	299,142	81%
MAA67002	CHARP	522,500	207,004	40%
MAABY002	Belarus	1,032,887	1,203,957	117%
MAAMD002	Moldova	72,898	50,513	69%
MAARU002	Russian Federation	1,622,229	1,352,858	83%
MAAAM002	Armenia	245,956	130,425	53%
MAAUA002	Ukraine	76,000	70,154	92%
MAAAZ002	Azerbaijan	159,891	97,835	61%
MAAGE002	Georgia	451,256	125,852	28%
MAAKG001	Kyrgyzstan	0	450,370	N/A
MAAKZ001	Kazakhstan	406,523	447,011	110%
MAATJ002	Tajikistan	1,397,877	752,599	54%
MAATM001	Turkmenistan	627,098	526,963	84%
MAAUZ001	Uzbekistan	198,494	29,253	15%
	Subtotal Europe & Central Asia	9,808,399	8,801,099	84%

Staff changes

Welcome to new colleagues:

Seija Tyrninoksa	Senior Advisor, Office of the Director of Zone	Budapest, Hungary
Elkhan Rahimov	Senior Officer, NS Learning and OD	Budapest, Hungary

Internal move:

Alberto Monguzzi	Acting Disaster Management Coordinator	Budapest, Hungary
Tímea Kramcsák	Acting Finance Manager	Budapest, Hungary
Ibolya Takacs	Finance Analyst	Budapest, Hungary
Sophia Kéri	Grant Admin and Programme Reporting Officer	Budapest, Hungary

Farewell to colleagues:

Joe Lowry	Communications Coordinator	Budapest, Hungary
Sonja Tanevska	Health and Care Coordinator	Budapest, Hungary

EU Funding for Development

Open calls for proposals with RCEU relevance (EU-level only):

European Return Fund : Community Actions

Monitoring return operations, family tracing for unaccompanied minors, vulnerable groups

Deadline 27 April 2012 + [Details DG HOME website...](#)

ICT Policy Support Programme : 2012 Call for Proposals

Pilot projects and networking; includes ICT for health, ageing well and inclusion

Deadline 15 May 2012 + [Details DG INFSO website...](#)

Youth in Action Programme : Action 3.2 Youth in the world

Cooperation with countries other than the neighbouring countries of the European Union

Deadline 15 May 2012 + [Details EACEA website...](#)

Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme : Call 5

Home Care: ICT-based Solutions for (Self) Management of Daily Life Activities of Older Adults at Home

Deadline 29 May 2012 + [Details AAL-JP website...](#)

Civil Protection Financial Mechanism : Projects on prevention and preparedness

Costs and benefits of risk prevention measures; Innovative solutions for financing disaster prevention; Cross-border civil protection; Operational cooperation in the European Civil Protection Mechanism

Deadline 31 May 2012 + [Details DG ECHO website...](#)

Europe for Citizens : Action 4 Active European Remembrance

Preserving sites and archives associated with deportations and commemorating of victims of Nazism and Stalinism.

Deadline 1 June 2012 + [Details EACEA website...](#)

Europe for Citizens : Action 1 Active Citizens for Europe - Measure 2.2 Support measures

Establish long-lasting partnerships and networks (information, training, platforms).

Deadline 1 June 2012 + [Details EACEA website...](#)

Youth in Action : Centralised actions

Exchanges, voluntary service, training, networking, youth workers, youth policies

Deadline 1 June 2012 + [Details EACEA website...](#)



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