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DREF operation update Czech Republic: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRCZ002
GLIDE n° FL-2013-000068-CZE
Update n° 1
19 September 2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of unearmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update:
19 June – 18 September 2013

165,608 CHF was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 19 June 2013 to support the Czech Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 3,400 beneficiaries (850 households). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Earlier this year, in June 2013, heavy rains brought about the rise of water levels in the Labe and Vltava rivers crossing from the south to the north of the Czech Republic. The western regions of the country, called Bohemia, where the capital city of Prague also belongs, were the worst affected ones. More than 430,000 households (approximately 1,300,000 people) were affected by the floods, with some 19,000 people evacuated.



Czech Red Cross branch representative provide a cash support for cleaning the wells.

Photo: Czech Red Cross

The Czech Red Cross identified 3,400 beneficiaries, elderly people and socially handicapped residents, who were in an absolute need of assistance by lending them dryers for their houses after the water receded and by organizing for them the access to clean water by cleaning and disinfecting their wells, 1,500 in number.

This operation was expected to be implemented over three months, and was therefore be completed by 18th September 2013. However, the beneficiaries were not able to provide the official certificates about the analysis of water of the contaminated wells because of the high ground water, which made the cleaning impossible. The samples were taken but the certificates have not been delivered yet by the local health authorities. Therefore the operation has been extended by another month to last until 18th October 2013. A final report will be presented by 18th January 2014.

The Mondelez Intl. Co. and Hewlett Packard Co. have donated CHF 67,375 to replenish the DREF allocation. Other major donors and partners of the DREF operation in the Czech Republic include the Australian, American and Belgian Governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian

Government, the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Government, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian Governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg Government, the Monaco Red Cross and the Monaco Government, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Government, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. On behalf of the Czech Red Cross, the IFRC would like to extend their thanks to all of them for their generous contributions.

The situation

Intensive rainfalls in the whole area of the Czech Republic caused a rapid increase of the river levels. During the night of 1st June 2013, small rivers first and also the large rivers later, started to overflow. A top level (Level Three) flood alert was announced in Pilsen Region, South-Bohemian Region, Middle-Bohemian Region, and Královéhradecký Region.

The Czech Government declared a state of emergency from 21.00 hours local time on 2nd June 2013 for seven regions (South-Bohemian, Pilsen, Middle-Bohemian, Liberecky, Kralovehradecky, Ustecky, Prague) which make up half of the territory of the Czech Republic. The action to control the floods was coordinated by the Minister of Interior and the Central Crisis Headquarters¹. The rainfall and flooding had reportedly been the heaviest in decades.

The Czech Government estimated the value of the material damages of the June floods at 800 million Euros.

Coordination and partnerships

Immediately after news about the first emergencies fire rescue units were deployed, including units of the Integrated Rescue System. There was central coordination of all rescue and clean-up operations, coordinated by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic through its General Directorate of Fire and Rescue Service which fulfils and coordinates the needs of the disaster-stricken regions. The Czech Red Cross as a member of the Integrated Rescue System of the country deployed its staff and volunteers throughout 35 branches.

There were regular meetings of the members of the Integrated Rescue System, and the Czech Red Cross took an active part in the meetings and shares the information collected. Also, the staff and volunteers of the Czech Red Cross were actively contributing to the floods-related activities by conducting assessments, planning, and organizing distributions.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the very first days of the emergency, the Czech RC was involved in the monitoring and the assessment of the situation. Psychological and material support was provided by the Czech Red Cross throughout 35 branches in the western regions of the country. The Czech National Society deployed more than 400 staff and volunteers so as to support the local flood-preventing measures and distribute items of first necessity. The overall response of the National Society was coordinated by the Red Cross Program Department at HQs in Prague.

The Czech Red Cross also launched a national fundraising campaign to support the victims of the floods, reaching out to the general public and the corporate sector through the media and its own web-page. There was a positive response from the business sector which started to provide in-kind donations to the Czech Red Cross. For this reason, the National Society has rented some additional warehouse space in the capital city, and further five warehouses are available in the affected region. Most of the emergency stocks which had been available on regional and local level had been distributed in the early days.

So far, the NS has reached more than 4,000 people with different services including psychological support, the distribution of relief items and actual participation in the evacuation. The IFRC Europe Zone Office has been in permanent contact with the Czech Red Cross Society since the onset of the extreme floods, and the Europe Zone Disaster Management Coordinator has been rendering professional support to the planning of the emergency actions. A senior member of the Europe Zone Office was deployed to Prague on a mission in order to participate in the needs assessment and to discuss the scope of the DREF operation, and a financial

¹ The information was received from <http://www.hzscr.cz/clanek/flood-situation-in-the-czech-republic.aspx>

specialist of the Europe Zone also visited the Czech Red Cross Society to advise on the administrative side of the operation.

The Czech Red Cross Headquarters is, in close cooperation with IFRC Europe Zone Office, monitoring the progress of the operation and providing the necessary technical expertise. Weekly operation updates are being sent to the IFRC Europe Zone Office. The visibility of the work of the Red Cross staff and volunteers is being ensured during the operation through local and international media.

The needs

The needs of the affected population were mainly represented by non-food items such as disinfectants, hygiene kits, blankets, rubber boots etc. The Czech National Society had already distributed most of its stocks available in their warehouses and later they were focusing on the distribution of items received as in-kind donation from the public and private sectors. Therefore any additional items for distribution in the future had to be procured from their own resources, in coordination with other partners, and with the support of the DREF operation.

The Czech Red Cross identified **850 households (3,400 beneficiaries)** in the regions of Prague and its surroundings, Middle Bohemia, North-West Bohemia, East Bohemia and South Bohemia who required special assistance. The selection criteria targeted elderly people, on the one hand, and socially handicapped people in poverty, on the other, who would not be able to cope with the situation by themselves.

Based on the outcome of the coordination meeting, and the location and capacities of its branches, the Czech Red Cross rendered immediate and tailored support to **450 households (1,800 beneficiaries)**, who were assisted with the improvement of access to clean water through water purification and the cleaning of around 1,500 contaminated wells, whereas **400 households (1,600 beneficiaries)** were assisted through the lending of drying machines.

The operation

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Outcome: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of access to safe water to 450 households (1,800 beneficiaries).

Output: 450 households (1,800 beneficiaries) will be assisted with access to safe water.

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid assessment of water and sanitation emergency needs and available capacities in close coordination with the local authorities;
- Implement the well-cleaning activities by Red Cross local branches in close coordination with local municipalities;
- Set up a cash distribution procedure;
- Deliver the resources to the residents to pay for the well-cleaning by a specialized company;
- Monitoring of the implementation with the involvement of staff and volunteers.

Shelter

Outcome: 400 households (1,600 beneficiaries) will be assisted with drying machines to resume their normal lives when returning to their houses.

Output: 400 households (1,600 beneficiaries) will be assisted with drying machines.

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid assessment in close coordination with the local authorities;
- Procurement and distribution of 40 drying machines;
- The drying machines will be lent to each household under a rotation scheme;
- Monitoring of the implementation with the involvement of staff and volunteers.

Assistance is being provided in the below mentioned regions.

Regions and villages being provided with assistance		
Middle Bohemia	North-West Bohemia	South Bohemia
Černošice	Region of Litoměřice – Litoměřice	Region of České Budějovice – Bavorov
Dolany	Křešice	Vodňany
Region of Mělník – Mělník	Terezín	Hluboká nad Vltavou
Hořín	Nové Kopisty	Bechyně
Brozánky	České Kopisty	Veselí nad Lužnicí
Chvatěruby	Region of Ústí nad Labem – Ústí nad Labem	Protivín
Lužec nad Vltavou	Region of Děčín – Děčín	Putim
Dolní Beřkovice	Hřensko	
Nová Ves	Dobkovice	
	Malšovice	
	Choratice	
	Těchlovice	

Progress of the well cleaning support

The project recorded a great response especially in Middle and Southern Bohemia, in the region of Prague and its surroundings, Písek, Tábor and Prachatice. The Czech Red Cross staff, together with the volunteers, is in an active and regular contact with representatives of the local municipalities of the towns/villages affected by the floods. The staff regularly visits the local authorities in person to inform them about this project and the terms of this provided service, which is also advertised through the local media.

Challenges:

- There was a slight duplication of efforts around the drying machines. Most of the affected residents used the drying machines owned by the municipalities or the Fire Fighting Service of the Czech Republic. After finishing the project the drying machines will be still available to the beneficiaries. Then the machines will be sent back to the Czech Red Cross's stocks.
 - The operation was planned to be completed by 18th September 2013. However, there is a delay in the process of providing the contributions especially with the local branch of Mělník. The beneficiaries were not able to provide the results of the official analysis of the water from the contaminated wells because of the unusually high levels of ground water, which made the cleaning impossible. Although the samples were taken, the certificates have not been issued by the Czech health authorities.
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Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 19 June 2013 for 165,608 CHF until 18 September 2013 to assist 3,400 beneficiaries.
 - DREF operation update n°1 was issued on 19 September 2013 with an extension of the timeframe until 18 October 2013.
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How we work

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

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.