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Emergency Plan of Action Operations update Croatia: Population Movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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| DREF Operation n° MDRHR001 | GLIDE n° OT-2015-000069-HRV |
| Operations update n° 1 Date of issue: 1 December 2015 | Timeframe covered by this update: 16 September – 16 November 2015 |
| Operation start date: 16 September 2015 | Operation timeframe: 4 months (1 October 2015 – 30 January 2016) |
| Overall revised operation budget: CHF 360,909 | |
| Number of people being assisted: up to 70,700 | |
| Host National Society involvement: Croatian Red Cross (CRC) with 220 staff and 65 volunteers from the Zagreb-based Headquarters and 19 local branches | |
| Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Headquarters for Crisis Coordination of the Government of the Republic of Croatia; Ministry of Interior; National Protection and Rescue Directorate; Ministry of Health, State Commodity Reserves; UNHCR, UNICEF, Caritas Croatia, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS); International Office for Migration (IOM); Centre for Peace Studies; Society for Psychological Assistance; the Islamic Community Humanitarian Organization “Meshihat” and other humanitarian organizations. | |

Summary of major revisions made to the emergency plan of action:

The strategy and the overall budget of the operation have been revised due to the deteriorating weather conditions, an increase in the number of migrants and the setting up of a new winter reception centre. The revision will allow the operation to meet the needs of the increased number of beneficiaries by providing them with warm clothes and raincoats. Some of the operational costs will be cut and some activities eliminated, which are funded by other sources or partners. The medical and first aid assistance has been taken over by the Croatian public health service and the psychosocial support is funded outside the DREF operation, namely from a donation of the Supreme Master Ching Hai's International Association received by the IFRC and earmarked for the Croatian Red Cross. The CRC teams providing psychosocial support only do the pre-screening of the most vulnerable migrants including those in need of medical and first aid assistance, but these professional activities have also been covered by the aforementioned donation. Additionally, some IFRC regional support mission costs were added to the operational budget.

The operation timeframe has been extended by one month until 30 January 2016.

As the needs are growing, and the number of arrivals is still high, the National Society is considering scaling up and launching an emergency appeal to provide an even more adequate support to the people affected by the population movement.

A. Situation analysis

Description of the situation

From 16 September 2015, after the Hungarian-Serbian border was closed, increasing numbers of migrants and refugees started arriving in Croatia. Until 16 November 399,047 people entered Croatia. The daily average was 6,436 people, with between 9,000 and 10,000 people arriving in the country on peak days (24 October and 12 November).

At the beginning of the operation, after being registered by the authorities and receiving humanitarian assistance in the reception centres, most migrants were transported by the Croatian authorities to the border with Hungary and a smaller number to the border with Slovenia. On 17 October, the Hungarian authorities closed the green border with Croatia. That caused a redirection of migrants from Croatia into Slovenia instead of going to Hungary.

With several reception centres used during the first days of the crisis and due to the continued high inflow of people into Croatia, the Ministry of Interior set up a temporary reception centre in Opatovac on 21 September. With the

weather conditions deteriorating, a decision was made by the Croatian authorities to set up a new winter reception centre that was opened on 3 November in Slavonski Brod, while the old one in Opatovac is now on stand-by.

Accordingly, the Croatian Red Cross shifted its activities to the new winter camp which caused some reorganization of the CRC operation as well as the reallocation of some operational costs. The Croatian Red Cross participated in the setting up of the new camp and the organization of the facilities. Thanks to the agreement between the authorities of Serbia and Croatia, since 3 November migrants have been transported by train from Šid in Serbia directly to Slavonski Brod in Croatia where they have been registered and provided with all the necessary assistance. Also, trains have been taking them directly to Dobova in Slovenia in line with the agreement between the Croatian and Slovenian authorities. These new arrangements contribute to an easier movement of migrants and refugees and to a more effective use of resources and provision of relief, which is organised by the Croatian Red Cross. The IFRC issued a DREF allocation of 350,909 Swiss francs on 2 October to support the Croatian Red Cross in assisting 20,000 people over three months with food, non-food items, hygiene items, “restoring family links” services, psychosocial support, and first aid. The Croatian Red Cross is distributing food and water, baby supplies, hygiene items, and clothes. It is also providing psychosocial support, “restoring family links” services and interpretation services for Arabic and Farsi. The majority of the relief has been provided in the temporary admission centres, while at the border points, relief items have been distributed depending on the circumstances. For the most part, the food items distributed to the people at the reception centre come from State Commodity Reserves. Every person receives food and non-food assistance from the Croatian Red Cross at least twice during their stay in Croatia. All services provided by the authorities as well as the Croatian Red Cross are rendered free of charge for the beneficiaries.

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

In line with the provisions of the Croatian Red Cross Law and the Civil Protection Law defining the Croatian Red Cross activities in crisis situations, as well as the existing year-long cooperation with the Ministry of Interior related to providing assistance to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the Croatian Red Cross has been responding to the humanitarian needs of the migrants and refugees from the first day of the population movement crisis.

After the stabilisation of the operation in October, as a result of launching the CRC’s activities at the temporary reception centre of Opatovac, the CRC was given an opportunity to upgrade its response to meet the migrants’ needs. A shift in the operational strategy and support services was needed due to the setting up of the new winter reception centre Slavonski Brod in November. This covered the deployment of human resources, logistics and supply chain as well as coordination demands on the part of Zagreb CRC Headquarters.

At the peak, 777 staff and volunteers were deployed on the ground at 17 different locations, such as border entry points, reception centres and border exit crossings. Due to the protracted crisis and the volunteers’ fatigue, the operation could not rely only on volunteers to provide every-day activities, to the level needed during the initial period. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Croatia approved the employment of a large number of people in mid-October to support the CRC through their public works system and made arrangements to cover their salaries. Since the beginning of October, the number of employed staff engaged in the operation has increased while the number of volunteers has decreased. The reasons for that also include the reorganization that was needed after the opening of the reception centre in Slavonski Brod.



Croatian Red Cross volunteers distributing food at the reception centre in Slavonski Brod
Photo: Croatian Red Cross

Presently, 220 CRC staff and 65 CRC volunteers and members of emergency response teams are active each day in the Slavonski Brod winter reception centre. Most staff members active in the operation have been employed through the public works scheme as employees of the local Red Cross branches. The local branch of Slavonski Brod is employing most of the staff in the field, while the National Society Headquarters’ staff coordinates all activities on the spot, assisted by CRC emergency teams members deployed in the reception centre on a weekly basis.

The Croatian Red Cross is providing all of its services in coordination with other stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of Interior, as the administrator of the reception centre, and with international organisations (UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF) and NGOs. In cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the CRC coordinates the activities of three international organizations

and 23 non-governmental organizations, with a total of 50 staff and volunteers present in the reception centre. The CRC’s coordination of international organizations and NGOs contributes to an efficient humanitarian response.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The Croatian Red Cross has been in regular contact with the IFRC Regional Office for Europe in Budapest from the outset, discussing the situation, receiving support and working together on the implementation of the DREF operation.

The Tracing Service of the Croatian Red Cross has been in contact with the ICRC Delegation in Belgrade for restoring family links (RFL) issues and has received material support from the ICRC.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The Croatian Government has appointed the Headquarters for Crisis Coordination to coordinate all activities related to the arrival of migrants in the Republic of Croatia. It meets in the reception centre, previously Opatovac and now Slavonski Brod, on a daily basis to take decisions. The Croatian Red Cross participates as one of the members.

The Ministry of Interior, as the responsible Governmental body for migration and asylum, is heading the country's response to the population movement crisis. The Minister of Interior heads the Headquarters for Crisis Coordination and is in charge of the reception and registration of migrants. The State Protection and Rescue Directorate has provided logistical support in setting up and organizing the reception centre with the assistance of the Croatian Military Logistics. The Ministry of Health has set up a clinic for migrants in the Slavonski Brod winter reception centre (previously in Opatovac) with public health staff. The State Commodity Reserves provide the majority (some 65%) of the food items distributed to the migrants by the Croatian Red Cross as well as some material resources used for accommodation.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

The Croatian Red Cross is monitoring the migration situation and the needs of migrants and refugees continuously. The needs of the migrants and the necessary adaptation of activities are assessed in daily meetings of the Croatian Red Cross, three international organisations and 23 non-governmental organizations. The outcomes are shared with the Governmental Headquarters for Crisis Coordination.

Based on the information to date, the average daily number of arriving vulnerable women and children in the Reception Centres has increased from 650 to an average of 2,200 women and children. The proportion of women and children among the refugees and migrants grew from an initial 30% to 45% by the end of October with a total group of vulnerable women and children passing through Croatia increasing to 140,000. out of this total 70,700 have been targeted to be assisted through the DREF operation with food and non-food items.

A total of some 70,700 beneficiaries have been selected from among minors and women with a focus on younger minors and RFL-assisted persons to be provided with DREF assistance –. The rest of the vulnerable migrants have also been assisted by the CRC staff and provided with food and non-food items from other complementary sources, but all assistance is coordinated by the CRC staff and volunteers, who are funded from the DREF operation. RFL services have been provided for separated families which mainly include minors.



Croatian Red Cross staff at the reception centre in Slavonski Brod
Photo: Croatian Red Cross

The higher numbers of beneficiaries and the deteriorating weather conditions have required the urgent procurement of additional clothing and non-food items including raincoats, foil blankets and warm clothes needed for the bad weather conditions from the end of September and for the almost wintry conditions in October. Since some products had been procured at better prices than was predicted, some expenses on food, hygiene items and clothing have been cut down in order to increase the procurement of raincoats, foil blankets and warm clothes. For that reason, the original budget has been revised.

The original emergency plan of action has been revised too, as some activities, such as first aid assistance and psychosocial support have been taken over by other organisations or are funded outside the DREF operation. Medical services and first aid have been organized by the public health service, while the pre-screening of the most vulnerable is still done by the CRC teams for psychosocial support, but these activities have been funded from other sources. The revised budget of this operation reflects the decreasing need for first aid material and lower operational costs of the psychosocial teams in the reception centres.

The operation's duration has been extended by one month in order to ensure the full implementation of the DREF operation. The funding for the most urgent beneficiary needs can be complemented by other resources including the CRC's national appeal funding if not covered by the DREF operation.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

The key change in the overall objective of the operation is connected to the increasing number of the most vulnerable migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who have been selected as the operation's beneficiaries.

The immediate needs of the most vulnerable migrants handled by the Reception Centres, especially women and younger children as well as a limited number of sick and injured adult males, are met through the provision of food, hygiene and other non-food items, as well as "restoring family links" (RFL) services and communications services for those migrants who have lost their family members on the migratory route.

Implemented strategy

From the beginning of this operation, the average daily number of vulnerable migrants in the temporary reception centres increased rapidly from 650 to 2,200 persons. The very high number of migrants and especially the increase in the most vulnerable groups, plus the bad weather conditions at the end of September and in October have resulted in a changed operational strategy. Also, after 3 November 2015, all operational activities were moved from the Temporary Reception Centre in Opatovac to the Winter Reception Camp in Slavonski Brod, that has also resulted in organizational changes.

The originally proposed strategy has been revised, as some activities have been taken out of the EPoA, for instance first aid assistance, including screening and referral and psychosocial support. Medical services and first aid assistance have been taken over by the Croatian Public Health Service. Psychosocial support is funded outside the DREF operation, namely from a donation by the Supreme Master Ching Hai's International Association received by the IFRC and earmarked for the Croatian Red Cross. The CRC teams providing psychosocial support only do the pre-screening of the most vulnerable migrants, including those in need of medical and first aid assistance, but their activity as a whole is covered by the aforementioned donation over the next few months. Subsequently the activities of first aid and psychosocial support have been cut from the DREF operation and budget.

Under the Emergency Plan of Action, the National Society has focused on the following actions in the reception centres – until 2 November in Opatovac and from 3 November in Slavonski Brod:

1. **Supplementary food relief distribution** - The operation has included the distribution of bread and bottled water to the 20,000 most vulnerable people at the reception centres. Bread and bottled water have supplemented the ready-to-eat meals contributed by the Croatian Government – the State Commodity Reserves, the stock reserves of the CRC and donations of other partner organisations and Croatian citizens. All of which has been given to the Croatian Red Cross staff and volunteers to distribute. In the first days of the migration crisis, the CRC used its own food reserves to meet the imminent needs of the migrants. After the first few weeks of the operation bread and other food items have been fully covered by the State Commodity Reserves.
2. **Non-food relief distribution** – As the weather conditions deteriorated very quickly, raincoats were very much needed, as well as sleeping bags for the most vulnerable migrants in the reception centres, in particular for women, children and sick or injured persons. Some 46,700 beneficiaries have been provided with raincoats for bad weather, and 12,000 pairs of socks and 12,000 foil blankets were purchased and distributed to migrants in need. The revised budget of this operation reflects the increased need for those non-food relief items. Some 650 sleeping bags have been procured as originally planned and will be put at the disposal of the most vulnerable beneficiaries. The sleeping bags will be retained at the transit centre for cleaning and re-use as needed.
3. **Hygiene items distribution** – 12,000 hygiene parcels have been procured as originally planned and distributed to women with young children, as well as to sick and injured male beneficiaries and a few elderly migrants.
4. **Restoring Family Links (RFL) and information service** - Migrants are being assisted with establishing contacts with their families through the Red Cross. Over 760 families have been assisted and reunited with their family members since the beginning of operation by the CRC field teams and the RFL Service in the CRC Zagreb Headquarters. The phone service has been offered to more than 250 migrants to help in re-establishing contact with their family members. The required IT equipment to assist the work of the RFL field service is provided by the Spanish Red Cross.

Since some products were procured at more favourable prices than had been envisaged, some expenses on food, hygiene items and clothing were saved to increase the procurement of raincoats, foil blankets and warm clothes. Accompanied with the savings on first aid kits and the operational costs of psychosocial teams, these funds have been reallocated, as outlined above and an additional 10,000 Swiss francs is requested to cover the additional needs and the extended time period of one month.



Croatian Red Cross RFL Services, reunited family in Slavonski Brod
Photo: Croatian Red Cross

Progress towards outcomes

Since the launch of the DREF operation, the Croatian Red Cross has been actively participating in the implementation of activities to assist the migrants, in order to reduce the suffering of the most vulnerable groups.

The activities of the CRC are focused on three main areas:

- Providing food items, hygiene items and other non-food items to the migrants in the reception centres – first in the temporary reception centre in Opatovac and then in the winter reception centre in Slavonski Brod;
- Tracing service – restoring family links;

- First Aid / Psycho-social Support (not DREF-funded).

The general perception is that the situation in the reception centre has significantly improved during the last few weeks, since the reception centre has been transferred to the location in Slavonski Brod, which is accessible by train. Due to agreements with Serbia and Slovenia, the transit of migrants has been done by train from the Croatian border with Serbia to the Slavonski Brod reception centre and from there also by train to Slovenia. Consequently, the migrants no longer need to walk to and from the border lines, and fewer people are at risk from disease than before. Hygiene has also improved and the atmosphere among the migrants is much calmer.

During the field work in the last two months, the field teams of the CRC have distributed the following supplies: 310,269 kg of food, 9,611 packs of biscuits, 3,002 litres of milk, 416,513 litres of bottled water, 50,908 hygiene packs, 154,429 blankets and 27,960 kg of clothing. The distributed goods include food and non-food items procured under the DREF operation, as well as those funded by the State Commodity Reserves and other donations coordinated and distributed by the CRC. The bulk of NFIs - mainly blankets and winter clothes - has been procured and donated by the UNHCR.

In the reception centres, the Croatian Red Cross teams dealing with food distributions and psychosocial assistance (PSA) continue to screen the most vulnerable persons, arranging for them to be prioritized for police registration on admission to the reception centre, during the food and NFI distributions or in their accommodation. Persons at medical risk are immediately transferred to the reception centre clinic. Separated families are accommodated under the auspices of the CRC, while assisted with RFL service. The most imminent and urgent needs of the migrants are covered by the CRC, with the funding raised through the CRC national appeal.

The tracing service is actively working on restoring family links between the migrants and their missing families. Red Cross information centres for migrants have been established since the beginning of the crisis in the first reception camps, Beli Manastir and Opatovac, and later, from 3 November in the winter reception centre in Slavonski Brod. In all these locations, CRC provided assistance to separated family members through the “restoring family links” services. Phone call services and free Wi-Fi access have been provided to the most vulnerable. Special attention has been given to unaccompanied minors who have been assisted by the Croatian Red Cross to get in touch with their families. So far, 8 minors have been reunited with their families by the CRC RLF service. For three of them, the CRC RLF service opened tracing requests also using the Back Office ICRC system. For the first 24 hours, unaccompanied children stay under the care of the CRC RFL field service, who are trying to find their family members through the RFL network. After that period, they are taken under protection and are taken care of by the Croatian social welfare service, while the CRC RFL continues tracing their family members.

Operational support services

Human resources

The Croatian Red Cross has mobilized its staff and volunteers to actively work at the temporary reception centres, on average 285 persons including staff, emergency response teams members and CRC volunteers. In the first three weeks of the operation, when the CRC mobile field teams were working at the different locations such as the border crossings, and the reception centres, the number of CRC staff and volunteers was 175 on each day. Due to the increased influx of refugees and the field conditions in Opatovac tent settlement, the number of the CRC personnel had to be raised to 285 persons a day. The Opatovac temporary reception centre has a capacity of 3,000 to a maximum of 4,000 migrants.

At the winter reception centre in Slavonski Brod there are, on a daily average, 15 Croatian Red Cross HQ staff, 5 local CRC staff (from the RC branch of Slavonski Brod), 30 volunteers, 35 Emergency Response Team members from 19 Red Cross branches, as well as 200 newly employed CRC staff hired as public works employees (some of them being CRC volunteers previously). Public works employees have taken over a large part of the volunteers’ tasks and activities.

Following the Croatian Red Cross’ moving of the majority of its activities to the new winter camp in Slavonski Brod, the reorganization of the operation was needed, which led to the reallocation of some operational costs in the DREF budget.

The DREF operation is covering per diem allowances and transport costs for the CRC HQ staff and the local city branches of CRC from other areas as well as providing the incentives for volunteers and emergency response teams members from other areas of Croatia. The DREF operation budget is also covering their accommodation expenses in the field as well as the working clothes for newly employed staff, volunteers and CRC permanent staff exclusively engaged in the coordination of the reception centre field activities.

Logistics and supply chain

All the items are procured locally in accordance with the Croatian Red Cross’s administrative procedures. The procured stock is placed in Red Cross warehouses in three locations – the Zagreb central warehouse, the Županja warehouse and the Slavonski Brod reception centre warehouse, where a few distribution points are set up. The distribution of food and non-food items is being done with Red Cross-owned and rented vehicles alike by the Red Cross staff and volunteers.

In October, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with UNHCR to support the CRC logistics and warehousing infrastructure in Zagreb, Županja and Slavonski Brod, covering the timeframe from 1 October by 31 December 2015. For that reason, the warehouse operational costs as well as truck / vehicles rent have been downsized in the DREF budget, as some of them have been included in the UNHCR grant.

The DREF budget has kept the warehouse costs not covered by the UNHCR budget, as well as the logistic costs, such as fuel costs for the CRC vehicles and rent of the personal vehicles and mini-vans, including the transport van that had been procured before the UNCHR grant was made available.

Information technologies (IT)

The expenses for communication (telephone and internet) have been included in the final budget.

A donation by the Spanish Red Cross has ensured the purchase of IT equipment for RFL activities, but that is not part of the DREF operation and its budget.

Communications

The visibility of the Croatian Red Cross is ensured with proper media coverage in both the national and local media and through press conferences at different milestones. Transparency is ensured through regularly published information on traditional and social media sites about the current activities and the progress of the operation, including the amount of donations and the aid received and distributed.

All relevant information and photos are shared with the public and the relevant partners through the Red Cross web site and social media, as well as through the national and local printed and electronic media.

Security

Chances of incidents among migrants are minimized through the daily presence of Ministry of Interior officers at the temporary reception centres as well as the improved accommodation conditions in the winter reception centre in Slavonski Brod. In order to protect the most vulnerable migrant groups, separate sectors were set up at the winter reception centre, i.e. a sector for women with young children. Its establishment has been advocated by the CRC.

Hygiene and health related challenges have been downsized significantly by the transfer of the migrants` reception to the Slavonski Brod winter camp that has a fully equipped clinic operated by the Croatian Public Health Services.

The Croatian Red Cross provided protective sanitizer kits for the volunteers and staff involved in the operation in order to ensure their well-being.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation & reporting (PMER)

The management of the Croatian Red Cross is monitoring all field activities using the standardized reports from the CRC coordination team at the reception centre through personal visits and telephone discussions with the volunteers and staff working in the area, as well as through periodic attendance by CRC HQ management at the daily meetings of the Crisis Coordination and through daily coordination meetings with NGOs and international organizations.

The regular briefings and regular weekly meetings of the CRC HQ coordinators supervising different operational activities are used as a mechanism to monitor, plan and evaluate the migratory situation and the implementation of the operation. All mentioned mechanisms are used to ensure a flexibility in the organization and to enable a quick response to any emerging needs.

IFRC provided the Croatian Red Cross with technical support through visits of its Disaster Management, Logistics and Finance staff.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF OPERATION

2/12/2015

Croatia - Population Movement Operation Update

| Budget Group | DREF Grant Budget CHF |
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| Shelter - Relief | |
| Shelter - Transitional | |
| Construction - Housing | |
| Construction - Facilities | |
| Construction - Materials | |
| Clothing & Textiles | 110,981 |
| Food | 38,304 |
| Seeds & Plants | |
| Water, Sanitation & Hygiene | 72,939 |
| Medical & First Aid | |
| Teaching Materials | |
| Utensils & Tools | |
| Other Supplies & Services | |
| Cash Disbursements | |
| Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES | 222,225 |
| Land & Buildings | |
| Vehicles | |
| Computer & Telecom Equipment | 0 |
| Office/Household Furniture & Equipment | |
| Medical Equipment | |
| Other Machinery & Equipment | |
| Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT | 0 |
| Storage, Warehousing | 3,484 |
| Distribution & Monitoring | |
| Transport & Vehicle Costs | 38,710 |
| Logistics Services | |
| Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE | 42,194 |
| International Staff | |
| National Staff | |
| National Society Staff | 36,898 |
| Volunteers | 25,552 |
| Total PERSONNEL | 62,450 |
| Consultants | |
| Professional Fees | |
| Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES | 0 |
| Workshops & Training | |
| Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING | 0 |
| Travel | 9,389 |
| Information & Public Relations | |
| Office Costs | |
| Communications | 2,624 |
| Financial Charges | |
| Other General Expenses | |
| Shared Office and Services Costs | |
| Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES | 12,013 |
| Partner National Societies | |
| Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other) | |
| Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS | 0 |
| Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery | 22,027 |
| Total INDIRECT COSTS | 22,027 |
| TOTAL BUDGET | 360,909 |