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Emergency appeal operations update

Croatia: Population movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n° MDRHR002		GLIDE n° OT-2015-000069-HRV	
Operations update n° 1		Timeframe covered by this update: 5 February to 6 March 2016	
Emergency Appeal operation start date: 9 February 2016		Timeframe: six months until 5 August 2016	
Appeal budget: CHF 2,601,799	Appeal coverage: 13.5%. <i>Thanks to the contribution of the British Red Cross.</i>		
N° of people being assisted: 175,000			
Host National Society: 180 staff and volunteers of the Red Cross City Branch of Slavonski Brod and the Croatian Red Cross			
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Headquarters for Crisis Coordination of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, State Commodity Reserves, three international organisations: UNHCR, UNICEF, International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as 16 other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Caritas Croatia, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Centre for Peace Studies, Society for Psychological Assistance, the Islamic Community Humanitarian Organization “Meshihat” and other NGOs.			

This operations update no.1 provides an updated situation in the country and how the Croatian Red Cross teams have adapted their response to meet the changing migration situation. This update also reports the latest Croatian Red Cross progress of the Emergency Plan of Action. Additional funding is needed in order to support the Croatian Red Cross to conduct the response activities within this Emergency Plan of Action.

Summary of Situation

After the closing of the border between Hungary and Serbia and shifting the migratory trail through Croatia, **from 16 September 2015 to 7 March 2016**, approximately of 656,830 migrants have entered Croatia and have been registered by the Croatian authorities. In 2016 a total of 101,578 migrants arrived to the Winter Reception Transit Camp (WRTC) in Slavonski Brod in Croatia by train from Šid, Serbia. In the WRTC in Slavonski Brod ,migrants are registered and provided with humanitarian aid and health care. After registration, migrants board the train which takes them to Dobova, located in the Croatian-Slovenian border crossing point.



Croatian Red Cross volunteers conducting activities with children.
Source: Croatian Red Cross

On 2 October 2015, CHF 350,909 was released from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to meet the immediate emergency needs of 70,700 beneficiaries by providing food and non-food items, hygiene kits and restoring family links services. On 1 December 2015, an operation update was published informing on a budget increase to CHF 360,909 due to the winterisation needs and in response to the relocation of the main reception camp in Slavonski Brod. The timeframe of the operation was extended until 30 January 2016.

On 17 October 2015, after closing of the “green border” (illegal crossing points through fields) between Hungary and Croatia, people were redirected to Slovenia and since then it has been the only exit crossing from Croatia.

On 9 February 2016, an Emergency Appeal was launched seeking CHF 2,601,799 to support the National Society to respond to the needs of 175,000 beneficiaries for six months. **Since the launch of the Emergency Appeal on 9 February**, there has been a significant change in the migratory situation in Croatia. On January 2016 the number of people arriving to Croatia decreased in line with the winter conditions and due to the new entry and transit procedures in the countries on the migratory route. Consequently, the number of migrants *returning* from the Slovenian border to Croatia increased as well as the number of centres where returned migrants stay in Croatian reception camps.



A reunited family through the Croatian Red Cross Restoring Family Link (RFL) service. Source: Croatian Red Cross

On 18 February 2016, the Heads of Police of the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed to enhance cooperation in the migration flow management and urgently adopted new measures, taking into account new criteria and restrictions introduced by the states along the migratory route. New standardised registration, controlled transfer, restrictive entry and transfer conditions were agreed by all signatory parties. The number of people arriving in Croatia has decreased significantly compared to the previous period, especially the peak months from September to November 2015. According to the Ministry of Interior (Mol), a total of 34,086 migrants arrived in February 2016 while in March 2016, 1,575 migrants were reported, which makes a 95.4% decrease. However, since the new restrictive entry procedures came into effect, a significant number of migrants were denied access and had to return from Slovenia.

Since mid of February 2016, the reception centres for migrants and asylum seekers in Zagreb and in Kutina have also been used for accommodation of returnees from Slovenia and the Croatian Red Cross teams regularly provide them with necessary assistance. The new trend that has been observed is that more migrants have applied for asylum during the second half of February and in the beginning of March.

On 26 February 2016, the Croatian government adopted draft amendments to the laws on border control and on defence to allow the armed forces to help the police in guarding the frontier when that is necessary for security or humanitarian reasons. The Minister of Interior said that armed forces would be deployed for border control only exceptionally and in accordance with instructions from the police.

As of 26 February, reported by the Mol officials, Croatia has received more than 450 migrants returned from Slovenia, the majority come from Afghanistan, but also from Syria and Iraq.

On 8 March 2016, after the EU Summit announcing the closure of the Balkan trail, the Croatian Government announced the Balkan trail closed and since that time there have been no new trains with migrants in transit arriving in the Slavonski Brod Winter Reception Transit Camp. However, at the moment there are 320 migrants in the Camp and another 200 migrants in Kutina and Zagreb – Kutina facility for asylum seekers and another one in Zagreb (hotel Porin), who are stranded in Croatia. New individual arrivals of migrants might still happen. Also there are no signs or official announcement that the Slavonski Brod Camp will be closed as a significant number of migrants is accommodated there.

Coordination and partnerships

Overview of the Host National Society

The Croatian Red Cross (CRC) has been actively responding to the needs of migrants from the beginning of the migrants' crisis providing protection and psychosocial support to migrants with screening of their needs and referrals, distribution of food and non-food items, distribution of hygiene items as well as community engagement and restoring family links services. The CRC provides assistance to migrants in all three locations where migrants

are accommodated. All CRC activities are coordinated with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) which manages the migrants' reception in Croatia and three facilities for their accommodation. Additionally, the CRC coordinates the response of three international organisations and all the NGOs that are providing humanitarian assistance to the migrants.

Movement Coordination

The Croatian Red Cross maintains close communication with the IFRC Regional Office for Europe in Budapest and the Regional Office of the ICRC in Belgrade along with other RCRC actors in the region and beyond.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Headquarters for Crisis Coordination of the Government of the Republic of Croatia

The National Headquarters coordinates the overall response.

The Ministry of Interior manages the Slavonski Brod Winter Transit Camp, Reception centre for migrants in Zagreb (former Hotel Porin) and Reception centre for asylum seekers in Kutina, all of which are now being used for accommodating people on the move arriving to Croatia – depending on their particular status (transit or asylum seekers).

The Ministry of Health is in charge of the overall health services provided to the people in need of medical assistance.

The State Protection and Rescue Directorate provides logistic support in organisation and maintenance of the Slavonski Brod Transit Reception Camp infrastructure.

The State Commodity Reserves provides a majority of food items distributed by the Croatian Red Cross as well as some material resources used for set up the Slavonski Brod Transit Camp accommodation.

UNHCR is present in the Slavonski Brod Camp with their staff assessing the situation with migrants and providing the majority of non-food assistance that is stored and distributed by the Croatian Red Cross.

UNICEF is present in the Slavonski Brod Camp with their staff and partner CSOs providing migrants with psychosocial assistance including facilitation of the child-friendly corners.

Caritas Croatia is providing relief items and other food and non-food assistance to the CRC and its field operations

IOM is providing its expertise on the population movement crises on large scale and conducting the migration flow surveys

CSOs such as Jesuit RS and Centre for Peace Studies as well as others are providing volunteers and psychosocial support.

Operational strategy and implementation

Overview

Since launching the Emergency Appeal, the Croatian Red Cross has continued to provide assistance to all migrants in Slavonski Brod transit reception centre as well as in other locations of migrants reception that have been activated distributing food and water, non-food and hygiene items, as well as Restoring of Family Link (RFL) and psychosocial support and protection services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Between 21 and 23 February, following the announcement that migrants were heading to the Croatian border by foot and/or by buses, the Croatian Red Cross relief teams and interpreters from Slavonski Brod transit reception centre were deployed to Bajakovo Croatian-Serbian border crossing, in order to provide basic humanitarian aid (water, biscuits, cans, raincoats and foil blankets).

The Emergency Appeal aims to mobilize support for 175,000 people for a period of six months. It is primarily focused on assisting women and young children, as well as providing care for sick and injured adult males, temporarily sheltered in the Slavonski Brod Winter Reception Camp.

The new migratory situation puts additional burden on the Croatian Red Cross. The situation in Slavonski Brod Transit Winter Reception Camp has evolved into a lower influx of transiting migrants with around 300 migrants accommodated at all times in the Camp and staying in for more than a week. The number of asylum seekers has increased with 15 new requests every day.

Reception centres for asylum seekers in Kutina as well as in Zagreb (Hotel Porin) are now used for accommodating people arriving to the country depending on their status, mainly the asylum seekers. This caused some rotations with the National Society's staff and their duties since all



Food distribution conducted by the Croatian Red Cross in Slavonski Brod Camp. Source: Croatian Red Cross

services need to be provided in three locations. Also, due to a longer stay of the migrants, more food packages as well as other items are being distributed. All response activities and services need to be available to all people staying in the three centres in adequate quantities.

Due to the changed migration situation and the increased number of locations with migrants to be assisted, the Croatian Red Cross reallocated some of the staff engaged in the migratory crisis response. On 4 March the Croatian Red Cross started the handover of its Slavonski Brod Camp management to the City Red Cross Branch Slavonski Brod to be accomplished by 1 April when the responsibility of managing the daily work in the Camp will be fully taken over by the City Red Cross Branch. This will result in a cut in the number of CRC Headquarters staff deployed in Slavonski Brod Camp in weekly shifts as well as the CRC emergency response team members. The National Society Headquarters personnel have taken over the response in Kutina and Zagreb reception centres.

In order to ensure a smooth and efficient hand-over in the changing and more delicate circumstances, the CRC needs to train all transit reception centre staff and volunteers in issues related to international protection, provision of PSS to vulnerable groups (including "stranded migrants"), RFL, cooperation, humanitarian diplomacy in the current context, etc. So for the first month of the management transition the CRC Headquarter' coordination staff will still be present in the Camp.

The CRC Headquarters maintain the supervising and monitoring role as well as technical support in some specific areas such as RFL, protection, coordination of IO/NGOs, logistics for which requires specific expertise (for those jobs, the field coordinators are the National Society staff). The Restoring Family Links service will remain fully covered by the National Society staff. Some CRC Headquarters staff will continue to be deployed to the transit centre but mainly in a coordinating capacity as well as to ensure regular assessment and monitoring of the field operation.

For the past four months, the capacity of the Red Cross City Branch in Slavonski Brod has been enhanced in terms of human and organisational resources and will be continued in the following period.

Since 3 March the daily average of the CRC staff and volunteers working in Slavonski Brod transit Camp has been around 180 persons working in three daily shifts around the clock – 158 employees by the RC City Branch, 12 employees of the CRC including the RFL staff (mainly newly employed staff with location of work in Slavonski Brod) and some 10 volunteers mainly local. Besides some 3 to 5 additional Headquarters coordination staff is deployed to the Camp to assist with the handover of the management responsibilities to the RC City Branch.

There are **four Psychosocial/Protection teams**, each with approximately 25 staff and volunteers providing the services in three shifts (some 75 staff working daily with one team resting), including interpreters whose services are essential and indispensable for this kind of work. On a need basis, interpreters assist medical personnel during medical interventions at the transit centre's infirmary and/or local hospitals. They are providing the screening and referrals of the migrants immediately upon their arrival, referrals to Government medical clinic and provision of

basic psychosocial support as well as the restoring of family links service (RFL) with whose team they are working in close cooperation.

The rest of the CRC staff and volunteers are working mainly in sorting the food and non-food items and its distribution while a smaller portion of them are working in management and administration roles including the coordination with the MoI/Police in the Camp along with IOs and NGOs.

The system of care and protection for vulnerable groups of refugees and migrants arriving to the transit reception centre in Slavonski Brod has been well established and fully functional, within the current transit circumstances. The CRC teams provide assistance to migrants upon their arrival by train until the pre-departure train boarding. Upon arrival, CRC teams make rapid needs and vulnerabilities assessment and provide appropriate assistance including emotional and practical support, psychological first aid, facilitation of health care, RFL, relevant information.

Tailor-made care is provided to specific vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, older persons, persons with disabilities and special needs, persons under extreme stress, traumatised persons. Persons at specific protection risk such as separated children, women travelling alone, potential victims of SGBV and human trafficking require particular attention and support, provided in accordance with relevant procedures and within the reality of the fast transit procedure. As some migrants had to stay longer in the transit reception centre for health related reason or wait for separated family members along the migratory trail, the CRC provided them with all necessary aid and support, 24/7.

As the situation in the transit reception centre evolved and nowadays there are around 300 migrants accommodated at all times and staying in for more than a week, the CRC adapted its response and included new activities in the specific sectors of the transit centre. Thanks to efficient humanitarian diplomacy effort in the field level, the CRC Protection/PSS team was allowed access to the specific sector of the Camp where returned migrants stay for days. For some time, the CRC was the only organisation beside the MoI to be allowed access to this group of migrants for humanitarian purposes; however, now also UNICEF has access twice a day.

The CRC teams provide them with food and non-food items as well as organise access to health care and provide RFL services. The stranded group of migrants feel very frustrated and vulnerable as their long, risky and exhausting travel is suddenly interrupted with no prospects to move on, but to be returned back to Serbia. This difficult situation might have serious consequences on the migrants' physical and mental health. Consequently, the prospect of conflicts and serious psychological and behavioural problems makes the CRC teams alert and prepared to respond within the CRC's humanitarian mandate.

The PSS, including relevant information, is regularly provided, in order to reduce their stress and alleviate frustration, particularly taking care of specific vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. Child friendly spaces and other social activities have been organised regularly. Basic information on possibility to apply for asylum has been provided, as well as referral to appropriate authority made upon request

Alongside with providing PSS to refugees and migrants, the CRC has been developing the tailor-made system of care for staff and volunteers in order to prevent work-related stress and burn out. 22 CRC staff and volunteers were trained in "Stress and Burn out in care work in crisis situations" and received practical tools and basic skills in facilitating debriefing sessions for staff and volunteers. Debriefing sessions are increasingly becoming integral part of the crisis intervention teams' deployment; however, more effort has to be made in order to reach all staff involved in the response operation, especially local and newly recruited staff who lack of experience and skills in working with refugees and migrants.

Planned interventions	Implementation
Quality programming / Areas common to all sectors	
Outcome 1 The quality of this operation is ensured and continuous improvement is provided	<i>Output 1.1:</i> The CRC monitors the situation and mobilizes its assets based on current needs
Progress towards outcomes: The Croatian Red Cross is constantly assessing and monitoring the field situation through regular meeting with staff and volunteers working on the field as well as meetings with IO and NGO partner organisations	

including on-site monitoring by Headquarters coordinators and operations coordinator.	
Health and care	
Outcome 2 The migrants transiting through Croatia are protected and provided with psychosocial and practical support, including providing recreational activities to children in the camp	<i>Output 2.1:</i> The most vulnerable migrants and refugees are identified and referrals are made according to their needs
	<i>Output 2.2:</i> Equipment and other supplies needed to support these activities are purchased to facilitate the work of the CRC teams in the protection of migrants and provision of psychosocial support in Sl. Brod camp
Progress towards outcomes:	
In the period covered by the Operations Update 3,483 beneficiaries (1,278 males, 911 women, 1,298 children) are identified and assisted among the most vulnerable group of migrants including referrals to health, PSS or RFL services.	
Supplies needed for psychosocial support activities were procured including equipment for child friendly spaces (toys) and supplies for beneficiaries.	
Water, sanitation, & hygiene promotion	
Outcome 3 The risk of hygiene-related diseases is reduced through the distribution of basic hygiene kits to the most vulnerable migrants - women with small children and sick or injured adult males	<i>Output 3.1:</i> The most vulnerable 43,500 migrants receive hygiene kits
	<i>Output 3.2:</i> The hygiene items are distributed to the shower spots in the Camp
	<i>Output 3.3:</i> The hygiene items stock of the CRC is replenished
Progress towards outcomes:	
In the period covered by the Operations Update Croatian Red Cross has distributed 3,898 hygiene items (hygiene sets) to the migrants mainly from the stock donated by UNHCR and other NGOs.	
Shelter and settlements	
Outcome 4 The immediate non-food needs of up to 175,000 of the most vulnerable migrants are met	<i>Output 4.1:</i> Migrants are provided with winter clothing (raincoats, socks, gloves, scarves, emergency foil) and backpacks are purchased and distributed to the most vulnerable migrants transiting through Croatia
Outcome 5 Increased shelter solutions are provided to the CRC teams delivering protection services at the Slavonski Brod Camp	<i>Output 5.1:</i> New tents and other equipment is purchased for communal facilities run by CRC teams for food and NFIs distribution, protection of migrants, provision of RFL services and psychosocial support for those migrants in need of follow up
Outcome 6 The non-food-item stock of the CRC is replenished to secure the overall capacity of the CRC to provide services	<i>Output 6.1:</i> The stocks used are replenished as part of CRC preparedness for subsequent response to emerging needs
Progress towards outcomes:	
In the period covered by the Operations Update the Croatian Red Cross distributed following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,591 kg of winter clothing to the most vulnerable migrants transiting to Croatia from other donations and National Society stock • 1,800 raincoats from UNHCR and other donations • 3,991 blankets from UNHCR and DFID donations 	

<p>Also in the reported period the new tent of 240 m² was acquired from donation of DFID to replenish destroyed Croatian Red Cross warehouse tent in Slavonski Brod Camp. The tent is used by other NGOs working in the Camp.</p>	
<p>Food security, nutrition, and livelihoods</p>	
<p>Outcome 7 The immediate food needs of the most vulnerable migrants transiting through Croatia are met.</p>	<p><i>Output 7.1:</i> Distribution of food to meet the emergency needs of 175,000 migrants (women, children and some sick and injured adult males) during this response.</p>
	<p><i>Output 7.2:</i> Items to support the sorting and packing of food – plastic bags, cups and paper napkins purchased and distributed to migrants along with the food</p>
<p>Progress towards outcomes:</p> <p>In the period covered by the Operations Update, the Croatian Red Cross distributed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39,468 lunch parcels sorted and packed in plastic bags with cups and paper napkins (food from Croatian Government State Commodity Reserves, and plastics bags and paper napkins to support the sorting and packing of the food from National Society stock) • 12,696 kg of canned food (sardines, pates) from Croatian Government State Commodity Reserves • 5,448 kg of bread (bread, toast and bagels) from Croatian Government State Commodity Reserves • 11,003 kg of fruit from Croatian Government State Commodity Reserves • 25,981 litres of bottled water from Croatian Government State Commodity Reserves. 	
<p>Restoring family links</p>	
<p>Outcome 8 Family links are restored wherever people are separated from or without news of their families</p>	<p><i>Output 8.1:</i> Family tracing services are provided to the migrants and when needed, referrals are made to the psychosocial support services.</p>
	<p><i>Output 8.2:</i> Vulnerable individuals¹ separated from their families are registered and active tracing is carried out to search for their relatives²</p>
	<p><i>Output 8.3:</i> When active tracing is successful, measures are taken to re-establish and maintain contact between vulnerable individuals and their families and to reunify them</p>
<p>Progress towards outcomes:</p> <p>In the period covered by the Operations Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 855 migrants were provided with tracing services to re-establish and maintain contact with their families. • 171 registered separated individuals where active tracing has been carried out. • 167 family resolved cases in re-establishing and maintaining contact with their families. 	
<p>Community engagement / beneficiaries communication</p>	
<p>Outcome 9 The immediate information needs of migrants are met and their awareness of the situation is raised.</p>	<p><i>Output 9.1:</i> Migrants are provided with basic information on temporary accommodation and their transport as well as on the assistance they have access to in the camp.</p>

¹ e.g., unaccompanied and separated children, disabled, elderly and ill people, injured evacuees, stranded foreigners

² active tracing when contact could not be re-established

	<p><i>Output 9.2:</i> Migrants with access to communication devices including service on recharging their mobile devices at the information spots at the camp</p>
<p>Progress towards outcomes:</p> <p>In the period covered by the Operations Update 36,743 migrants received information from the Croatian Red Cross at the Camp. 341 migrants going through the Croatian Red Cross information spots had access to communication devices including recharging their mobile devices.</p>	
<p>National Society Capacity Building</p>	
<p>Outcome 10 The operational capacities of the Croatian Red Cross are enhanced.</p>	<p><i>Output 10.1:</i> Specific workshop and training sessions on protection of refugees and migrants, psychosocial support, disaster management in the migrant crisis, restoring family links and stress management are organized.</p>
	<p><i>Output 10.2:</i> Furniture and equipment are purchased to support the National Society.</p>
	<p><i>Output 10.3:</i> The IT and data management capacities of the Croatian Red Cross are strengthened</p>
<p>Progress towards outcomes:</p> <p>In the reported area following workshops and trainings have been held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 representatives of Municipality, City and County Red Cross branches and 3 CRC representatives attended 3-days Training on Capacity Building of Experts in Child protection in crisis situations. Training was held in two groups, 15-17 February and 18-20 February 2016. • 2 basic trainings on “Psychosocial support in crisis situations” was held for Intervention teams from Red Cross branch Vinkovci (10 February) and County Red Cross branch Osijek-Baranja (11 February) with 43 participants. • 3 trainings for 70 Public Works staff working in Protection/PSP teams were held regularly on a weekly basis covering topics such as: "Communication skills in crisis", "Work with persons with special needs", "Specific protection needs of women including risk of SGBV". • “Communication and photography in emergency” education was held in Slavonski Brod in March for 12 participants. • Regular meetings were held with all members of Emergency Response teams and Public works staff in order to alleviate psychological burden. 9 meetings with 109 participants were held in February 2016. <p>In the period covered by the Operations Update, a draft version of a database on Camp monitoring (volunteers, staff, migrants, PSP and RFL beneficiaries and goods distribution) was created. Further development of the database is expected.</p>	

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

In the Croatian Red Cross

- Robert Markt, Secretary General; phone: +385 1 4655 814 (ext. 106); email: robert.markt@hck.hr
- Anna-Maria Radić, Head of Department for EU Funds and Education; phone: +385 1 4655 814 (ext. 141); email: anna-maria.radic@hck.hr

In the IFRC Regional Office for Europe

- Mette Petersen, Head of Country Cluster, phone: +36 1 888 4515; email: mette.petersen@ifrc.org
- Lucia Lasso, Operations Manager, Europe Migration, phone: +36 1 888 4500; email: lucia.lasso@ifrc.org
- Alma Al Sayed, Disaster and Crisis Response Delegate, phone: +36 1 888 4500; email: alma.alsayed@ifrc.org

For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

- Olga Dzhumaeva, Partnerships and Resource Development Coordinator, phone: +36 1 888 4504; email: olga.dzhumaeva.org

For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- Imre Nagy, Planning and Reporting Manager phone: +36 1 888 4526, email: imre.nagy@ifrc.org

In IFRC Geneva:

- Christine South, Operations Support; phone: +41 22 7304260; email: christine.south@ifrc.org

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.

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