



# GREECE

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 16.9M**

Appeal number **MAAGR001**

## In support of the Hellenic Red Cross



**86**

National Society branches



**544**

National Society staff



**4,478**

National Society volunteers

## People to be reached



**40,000**

Climate and environment



**5,000**

Disasters and crises



**23,000**

Migration and displacement

## IFRC network multiyear focus

### Longer term needs

- recurring disasters
- population movement

### Capacity development

- humanitarian diplomacy
- branch development
  - digitalization
- resource mobilization
- youth engagement

## Key country data

Population **10.7M**

INFORM Severity rating **low**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **75**

Human Development Index rank **33**

Population below poverty level **17.7%**

## Hazards



Extreme heat



Wildfires



Earthquakes



Floods



Population movement

## Funding requirements

**Total 16.9M** CHF

Through the IFRC



→ **3.8M** CHF

Through Participating National Societies



→ **40,000** CHF

Host National Society



**13M** CHF

### IFRC Breakdown

#### Longer term needs

**453,000** CHF

Climate and environment

**99,000** CHF

Disasters and crises

**2.5M** CHF

Migration and displacement

**806,000** CHF

Enabling local actors

## Ongoing emergencies

**MGR65002**

*Part of the Ukraine and impacted countries crisis*

### Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross\*

British Red Cross\*

The Canadian Red Cross Society\*

German Red Cross\*

Iraqi Red Crescent Society\*

Italian Red Cross\*

The Netherlands Red Cross\*

Swiss Red Cross\*

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

---

**The Hellenic Red Cross**, established in 1877, is one of the oldest members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). It is the largest humanitarian organization in Greece and has 86 branches throughout the country. It carries out a wide range of activities around health, social welfare, migration, search and rescue, disaster preparedness and response, restoring family links, first aid and volunteer training. The organization's annual turnover in 2021 was approximately euro 17.8 million.

In its auxiliary role, the National Society works closely with government agencies and local authorities, and has signed memoranda of understanding with several line ministries, the Municipality of Athens and other public bodies. This auxiliary role has strengthened in

response to a number of recent disasters, including the 2021 wildfires and earthquake in Crete. Between 2020 and 2022, the Hellenic Red Cross played a key role in the nationwide response to COVID-19. Notably, it was a key partner in the national campaign to roll out COVID-19 vaccinations, running two vaccination centres in partnership with local authorities in early 2022. The National Society's educational health stations continue to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations to vulnerable citizens and migrants and key public health messages, in partnership with the Ministry of Health.

In recent years, the Hellenic Red Cross has made significant progress towards its transformation for future relevance and impact.

## IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

---

### Joint situational analysis

Greece faces a range of humanitarian challenges, from climate and environmental crises and the COVID-19 pandemic to the vast numbers of migrants and refugees living in and transiting through the country. In addition, the effects of the decade-long economic crisis are still being felt, with austerity measures having had a negative impact on the provision of social services, including primary health care.

Greece has a declining and ageing population. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority's [2021 Population Housing Census](#), the current permanent population is 10.4 million. Between 2005 and 2020, it dropped from 11.2 million people. The most recent projections suggest this decline will continue, leading to a population of 9 million by 2050 and 6.6 million by 2099. The decline can be attributed to a combination of factors, including a very low fertility rate (1.3 births per woman), the financial crisis, emigration and the ageing population. This means there is less economic stimulation, fewer people in work, and more people emigrating to other countries. According to the [World Population Review](#), this is creating a cyclical effect of population decline.

Greece is a member of the European Union, joining in 1981. The next general election is expected to take place in spring 2023, but there is speculation that a snap election may be called sooner. New electoral laws mean the

country is likely to face a double election, with no party able to form a majority in the next parliament following the first round of voting. The second election will be fought under a different electoral law which, [according to the Kathimerini](#) newspaper, will make a single-party Government easier but may require a coalition to be formed. Current Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, of the New Democracy Party, has indicated that he will seek to form a majority Government after the second round of voting.

Following the financial crisis of 2007–2008, Greece faced a sovereign debt crisis. This led to a series of sudden reforms and austerity measures, resulting in impoverishment, loss of income and property, and a small-scale humanitarian crisis. The Greek economy has since suffered the longest recession to date of any advanced mixed economy. While there appeared to be a modest recovery from the 'great depression' of 2010–2016, the country was then hit again by the major international economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most important sectors of the Greek economy in 2020 were wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food services (23.8 per cent), public administration, defence, education, human health and social work (21.6 per cent) and real estate (15.9 per cent). [According to the EU's country profile for Greece](#), intra-EU trade accounts for 57 per cent of Greece's exports (Italy 11 per cent and Germany eight per cent),

while outside the EU, four per cent goes to Turkey and four per cent to the United States.

As of March 2022, the [EU's statistical office, Eurostat](#), put the Greek unemployment rate at 12.9 per cent. This is the second-highest in Europe, where the average unemployment rate stands at 6.8 per cent. Data released by Eurostat also shows that inflation in Greece reached 12 per cent in June 2022. This is up from 10.5 per cent in May and 9.1 per cent in April, and is the highest rate recorded in Greece in 29 years. The last time prices rose this rapidly was December 1993.

Greece is now bracing for a challenging winter in 2023, with high inflation, anticipated fuel shortages and

increasing pressures on the economy due to the continuing economic fallout of the conflict in Ukraine.

The compound effects of the long-term economic and ongoing migration crises have significantly affected the social landscape in Greece. The crises have created disparities in income, welfare and housing, all of which were exacerbated by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), measures taken to contain the virus, and the cost of living crisis linked to the conflict in Ukraine. With one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe, the [devastating health and economic impact](#) of the pandemic hit Greece particularly hard. It disproportionately affected vulnerable groups including older people, those living in poverty and the migrant population, heightening the difficulties these groups were already facing.

---

## Ongoing emergency response

For real-time information on emergencies, see [IFRC GO page Greece](#)

In early 2022, the IFRC launched the Ukraine and impacted countries crisis [Emergency Appeal](#) to assist more than 3.6 million people affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Due to the changing needs in the region and additional requests for support by other National Societies, the IFRC has been scaling up its response within Ukraine as well as in neighbouring countries, and revising the Appeal to include a total of 17 National Societies.

These now include the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, Belarus Red Cross, Bulgarian Red Cross, Croatian Red Cross, Estonian Red Cross, Red Cross Society of Georgia, Hellenic Red Cross, Hungarian Red Cross, Lithuanian

Red Cross Society, Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova, Red Cross of Montenegro, Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, Polish Red Cross, Romanian Red Cross, the Russian Red Cross, Slovak Red Cross and Turkish Red Crescent Society, while coordinating with participating National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The dynamic and protracted nature of the conflict and the ongoing displacement of people from Ukraine make it likely that additional National Societies will request IFRC support during the timeframe of implementation.

The timeframe of the operation will be extended to 31 December 2025, with a transition to country planning covering the operations of all National Societies after the revised Emergency Appeal has ended.

---

## Strategic priorities

### Climate and environment

Like other countries in the Mediterranean region, Greece is highly vulnerable to climate change. It is already sensitive to droughts and rising temperatures, and the climate is expected to become hotter and drier. The effects of climate change impact agriculture and tourism, both vital sectors of the Greek economy, and have severe implications for human health and the environment.

The last two years have confirmed the general trend of more frequent and intense wildfires and heatwaves in

Greece, aggravated by climate change. 2021 was a particularly destructive summer, with multiple wildfires and a historic heatwave that saw high temperatures reaching 47.1°C. This has created additional momentum at a national level for tackling the climate emergency. While Greece already had national [plans](#) in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the summer of 2021 led to the creation of a new [Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection](#), as well as the appointment of [Athens \(and Europe's\) first Chief Heat Officer](#).

Extreme heat is now a national priority in terms of mitigating the effects of climate change. Heat is estimated to be a leading cause of weather-related deaths and Athens is considered the hottest capital city in mainland Europe.

The Hellenic Red Cross has prioritized climate change within its 2020–2025 strategy and is developing critical operational expertise and a local response capacity to support communities that are vulnerable to climate-related disasters, including extreme heat. It reinforced this commitment by signing the Climate Charter in August 2021. This offers the National Society a framework for prevention and response efforts around the impacts of climate change in the country.

There had previously been limited progress in advancing this strategic priority in recent years, mainly due to a lack of funding for designing and implementing a programme. Successful responses to the 2021 and 2022 wildfire seasons and renewed collaborations with the Municipality of Athens, the National Observatory of Athens and the Australian Red Cross have created new momentum to develop and reinforce this area of work.

Tackling the effects of climate change (and specifically extreme heat) is a priority area of work for the IFRC network in Greece, building upon the value of the National Society as well as potential partnerships and a collective desire to tackle the humanitarian impacts on vulnerable populations.

**High-level objective:** The Hellenic Red Cross and IFRC will jointly develop programmes and operations to manage and reduce existing disaster risks exacerbated by climate change, and prevent new ones emerging. A range of activities will support local communities and National Society staff and volunteers in taking action to adapt to risks from the climate and environmental crises:

**Conduct a qualitative needs assessment around the effects of extreme weather events for at-risk populations**, and explore potential partnerships, avoiding the duplication of future activities and ensuring better understanding the needs of specific vulnerable groups. This may be carried out for Greece alone, or in collaboration with neighbouring National Societies which face similar risks and threats. This includes:

- Produce an analysis to document projects carried out by the Hellenic Red Cross with vulnerable communities, which could be adapted or restarted as part of its climate action programming

- Produce an external stakeholder analysis to map the services already provided by public authorities to address extreme weather events and their impact on at-risk communities, potentially including partnerships with the Greek private sector for in-kind donations and funding
- Assess the impact of extreme weather events on specific vulnerable groups (migrants, homeless people, older people, people living with disabilities) to inform the potential expansion of services and eligibility criteria for programming related to extreme heat
- Assess the impact of the upcoming energy crisis and economic inflation, which may create more vulnerabilities in human health related to climate change

**Build on existing partnerships**, to leverage the technical competencies and expertise of others in its **climate programming for extreme heat**. This includes:

- Build on the National Society's existing partnerships with the National Observatory of Athens and the Municipality of Athens to establish a mechanism to leverage impact-based forecasting for anticipatory action
- Explore partnerships with the private sector to facilitate preparedness and response to extreme weather events such as heat or wildfires, including encouraging innovation, activities such as mapping heat vulnerability or wildfire sensors, and collecting data about vulnerabilities
- Develop partnerships with peer National Societies which are already actively responding to extreme heat, and explore regional partnerships for collective action in response to extreme heat in Europe
- Build new alliances and partnerships with participating National Societies around climate change and extreme weather events, building on learnings from others such as on impact-based forecasting models as a trigger for action, data analysis to inform targeting and vulnerability assessments, sharing Greece's experience and accessing funding opportunities

**Create and build upon awareness-raising** activities about the **health risks related to climate change**. This will increase community resilience and response, particularly in at-risk communities. This includes:

- Focus on messaging about health risks of extreme weather conditions, including heat
- Adapt and relaunch educational health stations and mobile health teams, with sessions focused on reaching the most vulnerable groups, including people with mental health issues, older people, Roma communities and migrants
- Deliver the sessions either directly by the Hellenic Red Cross, or indirectly through the training of trainers for people who already work with these groups – including city officials, municipality employees, home care providers and educators in schools
- Create targeted communication campaigns for social and traditional media channels to engage people about the risks of climate change, supporting communities to adapt and prepare

Develop an **extreme heat readiness and response** programme through a [Simplified Early Action Protocol](#), to mitigate the impact of climate change on at-risk populations. This includes:

- Pilot a version of the [Telecross REDi](#) project - calling at-risk and isolated people impacted by heatwaves, tailored to the National Society in Greece
- Scale up homeless programming in response to extreme heat, working with the Streetworks Project for example, including developing outreach activities on climate-related health in urban centres
- Raise awareness, provide primary health care and first aid for heat through educational health stations, mobile health teams and the Samaritan response

Develop a national **humanitarian diplomacy** strategy focused on mitigating the impacts of climate change on the health of vulnerable groups.

This work will be done in collaboration with other neighbouring countries which face similar challenges. Under this framework, an external workshop or conference will bring together stakeholders in Greece, including corporations, experts and policy-makers, to discuss the issues, raise awareness and visibility around them and promote policy change that considers vulnerable groups.

The Hellenic Red Cross and the IFRC will also adopt **environmentally sustainable practices** to contribute to climate change mitigation. They will develop an action plan for greening their operations in 2023, following an assessment of the environmental impacts of the National Society and IFRC's operations.

The Hellenic Red Cross and the IFRC will also develop **environmental campaigns** to mobilize greater climate change mitigation efforts and encourage behaviour changes, including recycling, tree planting and restoration, beach clean-ups, and reducing plastics and carbon emissions. This includes:

- Train National Society volunteers, in particular young people, to promote sustainable practices
- Train facilitators to promote sustainable practices in schools, capitalizing on the National Society's existing permission to work in these settings
- Facilitate volunteer learning exchanges in the region, and share learning with other National Societies through seminars, training and the exchange and translation of awareness-raising materials
- Encourage young people to participate in sustainable practices through activities like visits to natural spaces, clean-up campaigns and tree planting

---

## Statistics

In summer 2021, **temperatures in Greece reached 47.1°C.**

---

## Disasters and crises

The national risk assessment for Greece identifies forest fires, earthquakes, floods and industrial accidents as key risks. The Hellenic Red Cross is well recognized by authorities and by the public for its capacity and experience in responding to disasters and crises. Its response capabilities include the well-established Samaritans (who specialize in first aid), search and rescue, relief, mobile health units, psychological first aid and cash-based interventions. In recent years, the National Society has strengthened its cross-cutting approaches around community engagement and accountability, protection, gender and inclusion, with staff dedicated to ensuring this approach is mainstreamed and followed up. Contingency pre-positioned stocks of relief items are kept in a central warehouse, ensuring the National Society's capacity to respond to new and emerging needs.



The IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross with enhancing its overall **preparedness and readiness** to respond to evolving crises, disasters and large-scale emergencies. It will do this by:

- Enabling teams to be better prepared through training on contingency planning processes, reinforcing the knowledge of volunteers through targeted training and simulations with first responders such as the Samaritans, and developing standard operating procedures
- Undertaking a focused cash-at-scale preparedness initiative by conducting a self-assessment of cash preparedness, implementing new information management systems, and building a culture of expertise in cash and voucher assistance throughout the organization
- Facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and learning opportunities with other National Societies, including branch twinning on search and rescue and peer-to-peer training on migration and climate-related emergency response programmes
- Supporting National Society funding needs through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal systems and mechanisms

In addition, the IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to contribute to wider IFRC efforts outside the country. Despite talent and capacity within the Hellenic Red Cross, there is currently no relevant policy for international missions, sending staff on secondments or loan, or for personnel to support international operations through IFRC surge rosters. The Hellenic Red Cross has made it a key priority for 2023 to invest in training and capacity building that ensures a subset of National Society staff and volunteers meet the mandatory training requirements for deployment. It will also ensure that qualified staff and volunteers can access international surge deployments through the IFRC surge roster.

## Statistics

**Greece has a score of 2.8** on the [INFORM Global Risk Index 2022](#), ranking at #122. This puts it in the low-risk category, although higher than most neighbouring countries other than Turkey.

## Health and wellbeing

The Hellenic Red Cross carries out a wide range of health and social welfare activities, but only needs support from the IFRC network with providing health services to migrants. For that reason, health interventions are covered in the following section on migration and displacement.

## Migration and displacement

Greece's geographic proximity to key migratory routes means it has faced continuous pressure on national asylum and reception systems in the last decade. Following the arrival of large numbers of migrants and refugees from Syria and the broader Middle East and North Africa region in 2015–16, Greece has made significant progress in developing its reception and asylum structures. Policies driven by Greece and the EU have now significantly curtailed access to asylum in Greece, resulting in a dramatic reduction in new arrivals in 2021 and into the first quarter of 2022.<sup>1</sup>

While the country's migration management strategies have resulted in fewer migrant arrivals, migrants and refugees in Greece today still experience significant humanitarian challenges and persistently unmet needs. In some cases, the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees in Greece have increased, despite improvements in the country's overall capacity to receive new arrivals.

According to a report by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the total number of residents in official migrant-hosting centres decreased from 59,000 people to 27,000 people (54 per cent) between March 2021 and March 2022. On the Aegean islands the number of people hosted has decreased from 28,000 in August 2020 to 3,300 in December 2021. This significant decongestion on the Aegean islands and on sites on the mainland is a result of reduced arrivals to Greece, an increase of returns, deportations, relocations and transfers, an acceleration of asylum procedures and a reduction of pending actions.

At the same time, Greece is seeing a new wave of arrivals as Ukrainians flee the conflict in their country. These arrivals have a different legal status and different needs. According to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 72,000 Ukrainians had reached Greece by August 2022. In June, an average of 505 people arrived from Ukraine every day; by July, that number had risen to 740.

<sup>1</sup> Analysis in this section supported by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab: <https://www.redcross.org.au/globalmigrationlab/>



It is clear that migration will be a permanent and long-term feature of the Greek social and humanitarian landscape. However, current policies, both in Greece and at an EU level, restrict migrants' rights, limit their access to asylum, and ultimately drive a decrease in overall numbers and an increase in vulnerability. With refugee and migration policy now squarely driven by the Greek authorities, policy choices can and will determine if the needs and rights of migrants in Greece are met.

The IFRC has been supporting the Hellenic Red Cross to review its migration programmes and services and to develop new initiatives focused on integration, livelihoods and employability of migrants. In early 2022, it launched a Migration Working Group to support these efforts and help coordinate the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's strategic direction in Greece. In April 2022, a migration and displacement assessment was carried out to establish current needs and gaps in provision, as well as considering the unique value that the IFRC network adds. The National Society leadership in Greece has emphasized their continued desire for IFRC support in this programmatic area, as it is seen as a key priority.

A migration strategy will be developed in the last quarter of 2022 to inform the future direction of the migration programme in Greece. Significant needs and gaps remain, and the National Society interventions are of high-quality, so the need to secure sustainable funding for this programme in 2023 is urgent.

The Hellenic Red Cross is part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the

Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

In 2023, the Hellenic Red Cross plans to maintain and expand elements of its ongoing migration programming. It will focus on the need for holistic social support for migrant communities, access to health care and humanitarian assistance, protection, and durable solutions in urban settings and on accommodation sites.

The Hellenic Red Cross will continue to provide holistic social welfare and integration through **its multi-functional centres in Athens and Thessaloniki**, which act as humanitarian service points in Greece's urban areas. The centres will provide:

- **Legal advice** to mediate migrants' questions and requests, bureaucratic support to access public services, and management of referrals to other actors
- **A women's group** to provide integration, psychosocial support and micro cash assistance for women struggling to integrate into local society
- **Greek language courses** for children who do not receive formal education
- **Psychosocial support**, including case management, for at-risk groups such as people living with disabilities or mental health needs, children at risk of neglect or abuse, unaccompanied children or those with multiple urgent needs



- **A youth club** to empower migrant youth through non-formal education
- **A nursery preparation project** to ease migrant children's transition into the public education system
- **Employability services** that support migrants to access the job market and approach employers successfully for recruitment, and provide life skills sessions to manage daily challenges
- **A telephone hotline** to give migrants and refugees accurate and timely information in their native language about their rights and services from the National Society and other agencies, as well as support with translation and interpretation
- Primary health care to migrants and refugees, children, women, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable Greek citizens through the National Society's **educational health stations in Athens**. These carry out immunization for children and adults, as well as health and hygiene promotion sessions. There will be some targeted distribution of cash grants to increase the impact of sessions such as mother and child care, or the care of newborn babies
- Access to the public health system through the **accompaniment and referral service**. This service will provide someone to accompany and interpret for refugees and migrants at medical appointments in public hospitals, primary health care, and in secondary health care units at public hospitals. It will offer training for health professionals to develop their intercultural competencies when working with refugees or migrants. The National Society will expand the programme to serve communities in and around Thessaloniki.

The Hellenic Red Cross will also continue to provide:

- Safe, stable and protected accommodation for unaccompanied and separated children through its **centres for unaccompanied minors**. These centres provide food, clothes and hygiene items, and support the children to access health and education services, psychosocial support and remedial lessons, including the Greek language
- Primary medical care and psychosocial support to vulnerable refugees and migrants through its **mobile health teams** at migrant accommodation sites on the mainland and at reception and identification centres on the island of Lesbos. They have additional capacity to respond to emerging needs in new locations or along new migration flows, and can expand their capacity to include medical first aid and psychological first aid as an additional service
- **Psychosocial support activities** at migrant sites, including recreational activities for children and individual counselling sessions for migrants
- **Community engagement and accountability activities** that support two-way communication with beneficiaries, ensuring the quality and relevance of services and informing the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy strategy on migration
- Primary health care for isolated refugees and migrant communities in urban settings, through outreach by the National Society's **urban mobile health team**

The Hellenic Red Cross will engage in new activities and pilot the creation of **health clubs** to promote health, hygiene and wellness of local communities at a branch level. This will involve targeted information sessions and awareness-raising campaigns for the wider local community, covering topics such as health and hygiene promotion and reducing risks such as COVID-19 and heatwaves. Activities will be open to all, including long-term migrants, refugees and local people, and will aim to foster interaction between these groups. In this way, the health clubs will also support migrants to integrate into and engage with their host communities.

The mobile health teams and educational health stations will also provide new **mental health and psychosocial support** to migrant populations, primarily in urban settings.

The Hellenic Red Cross will undertake **humanitarian diplomacy** with key stakeholders, on the basis of an agreed humanitarian diplomacy strategy. It will focus on the protection and needs of migrants in Greece and the need to improve reception and integration conditions. This aligns with the humanitarian principle of impartiality and humanity, reminding everyone of the importance of serving the most vulnerable people, regardless of their nationality, race, religion or any other factors. The National Society will leverage regional connections to undertake joint humanitarian diplomacy in line with a route-based approach to migration. It will also leverage community engagement and accountability capacity to regularly collect data from affected

communities about their needs, priorities and capacities in line with recommendations from the 2022 Migration and Displacement Assessment. The National Society will use this data to inform humanitarian diplomacy efforts and programming.

The IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to improve its effectiveness in assessing, understanding and responding to the priority needs of migrants, displaced individuals and host communities, in a number of ways.

The IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to **enhance partnerships across the IFRC network** and leverage the technical capacity of the Movement to support its response to migrants' needs in Greece. It plans to:

- Help review its migration programmes and services, and develop new initiatives such as mental health, integration, livelihoods and employability for migrants
- Identify funding opportunities and reinforce the capacity of the National Society to submit proposals to institutional donors such as the European Commission
- Facilitate training, knowledge sharing, peer exchange, capacity building opportunities and technical support missions from the wider IFRC network in support of the National Society's staff and volunteers
- Continue coordinating the Movement's strategic direction on migration, at a local level, primarily through the Migration Working Group
- Work in collaboration with the Netherlands Red Cross ([510 initiative](#)) on digitalization, building on the pilot information management initiative in educational health stations – rolling out similar tools, training and systems to facilitate data collection, reporting and services
- Support and actively engage with the virtual hub that coordinates technical support in the region on humanitarian service points, showcasing the National Society's knowledge and expertise in migration, building new partnerships and raising its profile

The IFRC and the National Society will enhance their capacities to undertake **humanitarian diplomacy** in Greece. They will:

- Develop a humanitarian diplomacy strategy
- Build capacity to further strengthen the National Society's ability to influence issues of concern to migrants in Greece, with a view to improving reception conditions and integration

- Build synergies with the National Societies in neighbouring countries, and the IFRC network, in line with a route-based approach to migration
- Ensure strong links with the Red Cross EU office in Brussels, with a view to strategically influencing EU-level policy decisions that have humanitarian consequences in Greece

In close collaboration with the ICRC, the IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to enhance communication between technical sectors of the National Society, ensuring that cross-cutting services around **restoring family links** are mainstreamed across sector programmes. They will:

- Identify focal points in branches for restoring family links, provide training, and re-establish service delivery – thereby reducing the need for remote services provided by actors outside the Movement
- Develop further ways of actively tracing family links throughout Greece, beyond the information provided by authorities, harnessing the strengths of National Society branches and programmes in the field
- Increase the promotion of restoring family links services within the National Society, through training where necessary – ensuring that staff and volunteers can explain the service, and making sure that onward referral pathways to the tracing division are well understood and operational
- Explore opportunities for cross-sector collaboration between National Society programmes to find synergies, improve cost-effectiveness and provide better services to migrants in Greece

## Statistics

---

**72,000 Ukrainians** had reached Greece by August 2022

---

## Values, power and inclusion

The Hellenic Red Cross is engaged in a wide range of activities in the areas of protection, gender and inclusion, community engagement and accountability, and education. However, it only requires support from the IFRC network to provide these activities for migrants. Therefore, information about interventions relevant to this strategic priority are covered in the section on migration and displacement above.

---

## Enabling local actors

The National Society's key organizational priorities include pursuing its transformation for future relevance and impact, consolidating its organizational capacities and increasing resource mobilization. Funding for humanitarian programming in Greece is limited, with humanitarian crises elsewhere in the world drawing attention and resources. Lower numbers of new migrant arrivals are also taking the situation in Greece out of the headlines, despite the ongoing needs in the country. Many partners have had to scale down or exit as a result of the funding situation, and funding mechanisms are restrictive, with heavy compliance requirements.

### Engaged

Capitalizing on the resources of the Movement, the IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to enhance and reinforce its humanitarian diplomacy strategy. It will also improve its information sharing and digital systems, so that it establishes its position and increases its capacity to influence policy change and better understand the key challenges faced by the communities it serves.

Training, online learning and technical support will be key to enhancing the **humanitarian diplomacy capacity** of both the National Society and the IFRC. This will include:

- Strengthening the understanding and strategic positioning of the auxiliary role of the National Society
- Providing technical support and training, with Movement partners, for developing a humanitarian diplomacy policy and advocacy activities, to address the needs of vulnerable people and groups
- Developing humanitarian diplomacy and communications strategies that are consistent with operational humanitarian diplomacy priorities, and developing related promotional material

The Hellenic Red Cross has made progress in 2022 with further **digitalizing its operations**, with a focus on information management and digital development, particularly with support from the [510 initiative](#) of the Netherlands Red Cross, and training on monitoring and collecting data with IFRC support. In 2023, the IFRC and the National Society will continue to progress digitalization by ensuring the appropriate tools and support are

in place for the transition. This will include continued support from the 510 initiative, along with training at National Society headquarters and branch level to foster digital literacy among volunteers and staff members.

### Accountable

To improve the National Society's financial sustainability and independence, as well as the agility and efficiency of its management, the IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross in 2023 to build capacity in risk management and resource mobilization, developing and adapting policies for staff and volunteers.

The IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross to:

- Carry out training that increases its capacity for risk management
- Develop the National Society's **framework for principled action for staff and volunteers**, including developing and adopting a code of conduct for staff and volunteers; translating the IFRC protection, gender and inclusion policy into the Greek language; developing and implementing National Society policies on gender and diversity and on the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation
- Develop and adopt an induction course that includes online training – covering principles, the code of conduct and the principles of humanitarian action – for National Society staff and members of the central and regional governing boards
- Improve the **Hellenic Red Cross's resource mobilization** by conducting a market analysis that profiles donors and identifies donation trends in the Greek humanitarian market, introducing a fundraising platform to increase the National Society's donation channels for online giving, and considering the recruitment of a resource mobilization officer to support the work of the National Society's resource department
- Acquire a **customer relations management database** to improve real-time data management, case management capacity, reporting and data-driven decision-making, as well as volunteer management cost efficiencies

- Increase **finance and procurement capacity** linked to the transition to the IFRC initiative “working with project partners”, through training in managing accounting systems and software, upgrading National Society finance accounting and logistics software, and developing a logistics development plan using IFRC tools

## Trusted

Reinforcing local level engagement will be a priority for the Hellenic Red Cross in 2023, and this will be achieved by empowering branches and investing in volunteer and youth development. The IFRC will support the Hellenic Red Cross with **branch level capacity development** in line with the National Society’s organizational development plan. Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) exercises were planned for the third quarter of 2022, to be rolled out to at least five branches each year, increasing their management and performance capacity. Other plans to support this process include the training of trainers for facilitators from different local regions, organizing branch fora with future BOCA cohorts and producing a branch development handbook in the Greek language.

An Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) review workshop will be arranged to assess progress in meeting the minimum organizational standards of a well-functioning National Society, mapping out improvements already made and identifying further development needs. The self-assessment part of the process is intended

to capture the National Society’s strengths and weaknesses as a whole, in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

The IFRC will also support the Hellenic Red Cross to reinforce and accelerate its **local digitalization** efforts at branch level. Creating communications channels through free platforms will encourage information sharing and peer support. The National Society will also develop a digital library for headquarters and branch staff, volunteers and governing board members to promote awareness of and access to key documents such as policies and project proposals.

The IFRC will support the National Society to develop a youth engagement policy that ensures participation in decision-making within the organization. National and regional assemblies, including youth assemblies, will be arranged to promote collaboration and connection between National Society members, volunteers and staff.

The IFRC will foster engagement between the Hellenic Red Cross and the wider IFRC network by facilitating **peer-to-peer learning**. It will ensure that the National Society’s technical staff take part in relevant thematic regional networks and workshops such as youth and volunteer management, resource mobilization and National Society development. It will also facilitate peer-to-peer exchange between the leadership of the Hellenic Red Cross and other National Societies so they can share best practices, challenges, and the solutions they have each identified for their own unique contexts.

# THE IFRC NETWORK

---

## The IFRC

**The IFRC** established a presence in Greece in 2015 as part of a large-scale response operation of the IFRC network around the migration crisis. The IFRC support to the Hellenic Red Cross centres on strategic and operational coordination and humanitarian diplomacy. As well as assisting with emergency operations

responding to population movement, disasters and COVID-19, the IFRC also supports the National Society in Greece with capacity building and organizational development, in line with its comprehensive organizational development plan. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

## Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Engaged
Italian Red Cross	CHF 0.04M	
		<b>Total</b>
		<b>0.04M</b>

## Membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, development assistance, and the auxiliary role efforts to reinforce the role of National Societies in their respective countries.

A number of participating National Societies have actively supported the migration programme in Greece, generously funding the recent IFRC Population Movement Emergency Appeal and the migration pillar of the IFRC 2022 operational plan. These include the **Austrian Red Cross, British Red Cross, German Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross**, and, most recently, **the Canadian Red Cross Society**.

Following the departure of the German Red Cross in late 2021, there are currently no participating National Societies present and operational in the country. The Hellenic Red Cross is, however, involved in ongoing collaborations with a number of participating National Societies, including a robust technical collaboration around information management with **the Netherlands Red Cross** (the [510](#) initiative). It is also developing an emerging partnership with the **Australian Red Cross** on extreme heat and climate action.

In response to the Ukraine conflict, bilateral cooperation emerged internationally with the **Ukrainian Red Cross Society, the Romanian Red Cross** and the **Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova**. A separate trilateral partnership began in 2021 to foster collaboration on climate change, migration and disaster response between the Hellenic Red Cross, the **Cyprus Red Cross Society** and the **Egyptian Red Crescent Society**.

## Movement coordination

The IFRC holds bi-weekly coordination meetings with the leaders of the National Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In addition, a Migration Working Group was established in 2022 to offer a platform for advancing the Movement's response to migration in Greece. The group meetings take place bi-monthly and focus on informing the development of a migration strategy for Greece, which is expected in late 2022 or early 2023. This is carried out in line

with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted Seville Agreement 2.0.

The ICRC is present in Greece and focuses on promoting international humanitarian law and protection activities in the context of migration, including restoring family links, detention monitoring and preventing people from going missing.



---

## Coordination with other actors

During 2022, the Hellenic Red Cross and the IFRC worked with other humanitarian agencies, especially around migration. The Chief Heat Officer, the Municipality of Athens and the Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation

established a new partnership in 2022 in response to extreme heat, resulting in a fruitful collaboration during the peak summer months.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

---

## Contact Information

### Jessie Thomson

Head of Delegation  
IFRC Country Delegation Greece,  
Athens

**T** +306 9575 08929

[jessie.thomson@ifrc.org](mailto:jessie.thomson@ifrc.org)

### Andrej Naricyn

Head of Strategic Engagement  
& Partnerships  
IFRC Regional Office for Europe,  
Budapest

**T** +36 70 430 6528

[andrej.naricyn@ifrc.org](mailto:andrej.naricyn@ifrc.org)

### Hellenic Red Cross

**W** [www.redcross.gr](http://www.redcross.gr)

---