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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Bulgaria: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF Operation n° MDRBG002	Glide n° FL-2014-000113-BGR
Date of issue: 20 August 2014	Expected timeframe: 3 months Expected end date: 19 November 2014
DREF allocated: CHF 290,712	
Number of people affected: 7,247	Number of people to be assisted: 3,840
Host National Society(ies) presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): 55 staff and volunteers	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

After an exceptionally dry winter, the weather in Bulgaria started becoming very wet, going to the other extreme. Since the beginning of the summer, heavy rains and hail storms have been a constant problem for the local population.

In the late hours of 31 July, storms and heavy rainfalls in North-West Bulgaria caused devastating floods in the regions of Sofia, Plovdiv, Montana and Vratsa.

In the region of Vratsa, extensive torrential rains resulted in two waves of flooding on 1 and 2 August 2014. After the river Skat ruptured its banks, two consecutive waves invaded the town of Mizia, Vratsa Region. The number of people directly affected was 7,247 (2,416 households¹) in the region of Vratsa. Based on the ongoing assessment conducted by the responsible authorities, more than 80 houses have been totally destroyed, not suitable for living any longer, and 350 have been badly damaged. The direct results of the flood are represented by two fatalities and 800 people evacuated in Mizia, from which approximately 200 were accommodated in an evacuation centre managed by the Municipality of Mizia. Furthermore, 100 per cent of the crops in the region has been destroyed and 80 per cent of the livestock is dead. Mizia, Borovan, Byala Slatina and Vratsa are among the most devastated towns and villages. The water level in the town of Mizia and in most of the affected villages reached 2.5 to 5 meters during the most critical moments.

Although most of the water covering Mizia has been drained, the situation is still critical. Tap water is contaminated and unfit for drinking or even washing. Electricity is still cut in some parts of Mizia (the town most affected by the floods). Rotting carcasses of dead animals are increasing the risk of diseases, and crippled buildings are also a threat to the population.



Needs assessment carried out by the National Disaster Response Team
Photo: Bulgarian Red Cross

¹ The average size of a family is approximately three people.

Summary of the current response

Overview of the Host National Society

Shortly after the first waves of the floods, the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) started immediate relief actions. As the first step, the Bulgarian RC deployed a local team of volunteers and activated and deployed teams from the neighbouring regions. Since most towns were still under water at the beginning, BRC's activities were limited to food aid, relief/supply distribution and psychosocial support services.

The Bulgarian Red Cross organized the supply and the distribution of bottled water and managed the organization and distribution of canned food and hot meal once per day for the population and the teams working on the field, which, in total, added up to more than 5,800 people being supplied. The distribution of bottled water started on the second day after the disaster, during the second wave of floods.

With the development of the situation and as the water started to withdraw, more Red Cross teams were deployed working on 4-5 day shifts to ensure adequate humanitarian help. The number of volunteers and staff working in the field during the disaster response is 55 people. The National Disaster Response Team of the BRC has been deployed with the task to assess the damages and the needs of the affected residents. Currently, around 90 per cent of the homes inside the flooded area have been visited and assessed by members of the BRC. Furthermore, during the needs assessment, psychosocial (PSS) assessment was also held and people in need of psychosocial support were identified and transferred to the PSS teams of BRC which are working with seven to nine new cases daily. Emergency Staff Headquarter meetings at the Bulgarian Red Cross HQ are held on a regular basis.

The work of the volunteers and staff of the BRC is taking place in full collaboration with the army and the state authorities. This collaboration was especially important in the early stages of the mission, when the access to the towns was only possible with the specialized equipment of the military and the civil protection units, through which all the emergency relief items provided by the BRC (disinfectants, blankets, tarpaulins, bed linen, buckets, etc.) have been delivered to the affected population.

The Bulgarian Red Cross has also made a national appeal for donations to a designated bank account and via SMS.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Immediately after the disaster, the Bulgarian Government dispatched and deployed specialized teams for search and rescue. The rescue on site was a combined operation of the military forces and the civil protection units. For the rescue and evacuation of the affected, a helicopter and speedboats were utilized by the authorities. Teams for cleaning and restoring the infrastructure of the area have also been deployed. Daily meetings were organized with all the relevant stakeholders in order to improve inter-agency communication and assistance.

A Field Headquarters was established with the purpose to assist the communication and coordination between the different agencies and organizations. The involved parties are the national and regional fire departments, Civil Protection, Bulgarian Red Cross, Bulgarian Military Forces and Bulgarian Police.

The military forces, together with the Bulgarian Red Cross, have set up a field kitchen, which supplies the food products and distributes 600 to 800 hot meals daily to the affected people.

Since the end of the search and rescue operation and the withdrawal of surface waters, the civil protection authorities have been permanently engaged in pumping of the water and cleaning public buildings.

Volunteers from all around the country are involved in cleaning mud and debris from the houses. The organization and the accommodation of the volunteers are handled by the local authorities.

Regional health inspectorates (structures under the Ministry of Health) have been activated in all affected areas, providing advice and public warnings of the epidemiological and toxic dangers related to the flood waters, and monitoring of the hygiene situation, disinfection and availability of drinking and safe water.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

In accordance with its auxiliary role, the Bulgarian Red Cross Society supports the Government in the humanitarian aspects of the action through distribution of food and non-food items, such as ready-to-eat food, hygiene kits, washing materials, blankets, bed linen, recreational and psychosocial support care.

The geographical specifics of the region and the heavy rain (110 liters per m² for more than two days) led to an unexpected long period of inaccessibility in 80 per cent of the affected regions. This caused the postponing of the start of the assessment activities and the actual clarification of the damages, the needs and the number of the affected residents. In the first critical phase, BRC was supporting the population with food and water due to lack of conditions for cooking and lack of potable water. After five days of receding floods, the water level reached critical levels and the access to the areas was limited again.

Approximately 10-12 days after the disaster, the access to the affected areas was possible in 80 per cent of the places. In the first possible moment, BRC deployed assessment teams and was able to collect the information needed for building up the actual plan of action. The rapid assessment showed that the population`s needs are as follows.

- Organizing of emergency shelter for the people who need to be evacuated;
- Rebuilding, restoring and drying of the damaged houses;
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the affected houses;
- Providing of food items and drinking water;
- Providing of non-food items to the affected population;
- Providing of psychosocial support.

The state authorities are responsible for the provision of emergency shelter. As part of its mandate, BRC has organized the provision of food and water to the whole population in the affected area during the first 15 critical days. This support is still ongoing after the development of the situation, giving food supplies only for the affected population and water for the whole population. In parallel with covering the current emergency needs, the organization started planning for enabling recovery and a decent and safe return of the affected people to their homes after the total drainage of the water, restoring the quality of the water and the electricity system. Based on the ongoing assessment for identifying the needs after the disaster, it is evident that this planning should include dryers, PSS activities, cleaning and construction materials and basic kitchen utensils and electric appliances which will enable the affected population to start returning back to their settlements. BRC will lend out driers for temporary use and will assist the affected population with psychosocial support by its network of trained volunteers and professionals.

Under this operation, BRC will replenish the stocks of its disaster reserve and will implement a voucher scheme for fulfilling the needs of cleaning and construction materials and kitchen utensils.

Selection of people to be reached

The beneficiaries of this operation would be a number of affected households in Vratsa region. The ranking prioritization of the beneficiaries will be based on the needs assessment, and the final decision will be made by the community councils which will include representatives from BRC, the municipality and the affected population. The affected households will be ranked and priority will be given by the following criteria:

- Households most affected by the disaster;
- Single mothers / households with women as bread-winners, mothers with small children;
- Families with people with disabilities;
- Households consisting of single elderly people, elderly couples;
- Large families (more than five members);
- Families that are not supported by others with the same or similar support.

Based on the initial assessment, the allocation by municipalities will be as follows:

Settlement	Affected people	Affected households	Operation request/HH
Mizia	3,972	1,324	550
Byala Slatina	2,100	700	425
Borovan	725	242	175
Vratsa	450	150	130
	7,247	2,416	1,280

Risk Assessment

As the weather forecast foresees more rains in the coming weeks, and considering the fact that the fields are soaked, a new wave of floods can be expected.

Rotting carcasses can cause future health problems, although there is a special organization dealing with their collection and incineration. The regional health inspectorate is in the field, monitoring health issues. In case of any hazards reported, the volunteers will be withdrawn.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

1,280 households (3,840 people) affected by the heavy floods in the north-western part of Bulgaria/ Vratsa region are assisted in fulfilling their hygiene and basic households needs.

Proposed strategy

The proposed action foresees to cope with the needs of 1,280 households in Vratsa region and the replenishment of the stock already distributed by Bulgarian Red Cross.

The table below shows the items and the quantities which have already been distributed by BRC.

Items	Quantity	Distribution	For replenishment
Blankets	pcs.	820	850
Buckets	pcs.	140	150
Disinfectants and cleaning detergents	l	6,450	0
Bed linen sets	pcs.	780	800
Rubber boots	pcs.	220	250
Pillows	pcs.	280	300
Canned food	pcs.	179,700	0
Bottled water	l	192,604	0
Hot meals	pcs.	6,400	0
Wheat flour, beans and pasta	kg	18,900	0
Tarpaulins	pcs.	100	0
Food parcels	pcs.	400	0
Bread	kg	3,750	0

During a time of harsh living conditions with no access to 80 per cent of the areas and the lack of clean water, no access to local shops and interrupted electricity, BRC was supporting the population with food and water supplies provided by donors. At the moment, the water has receded and the access to the affected houses is restored. The operation will include assistance to the affected population in the form of commodity vouchers for cleaning and construction materials and kitchen utensils.

The market analysis is being started at the moment, and the preliminary results show that the needed items are available in the local market, and the markets are able to respond to the quality² and quantities and the needs covered. The vouchers will be conditionally given only for materials needed for disinfecting and restoring the houses and replacing lost kitchen utensils. The vouchers will be distributed based on assessment and clear beneficiary selection criteria – approx. CHF 188.68 per household. The value of a voucher was decided based on the following criteria:

- Market analysis and price of the items;
- Survey among the beneficiaries and assessment of the needs.

The BRC will, in close cooperation with the IFRC Europe Zone Office in Budapest, monitor the implementation of the activities and provide the necessary technical advice for the beneficiaries.

² Bulgaria as a member state of the European Union has strict policies and regulations for wholesale and retail trade to ensure quality control and consumer protection.

Operational support services

Human resources

The BRC staff is generally well prepared for responding to critical situations, but in order to ensure the proper reaction to this crisis, their capacity will be reinforced through additional trainings and activities.

The IFRC Europe Zone Disaster Management team is providing technical support to BRC.

Logistics and supply chain

The procurement and logistics procedures are in accordance with the national legislation in the country, BRC regulations and also the procurement procedures of the IFRC. All the items procured refer to the Emergency Items Catalogue specifications and regulations.

Communications

The Bulgarian Red Cross is receiving a very complex mass media coverage and network. All the actions done are widely reported on the media and also on the social media portals of the National Society.

A weekly update of the Bulgarian Red Cross's floods operation is published on the National Society's official web page:

<http://www.redcross.bg>. The BRC Public Relations and Media Department shares news, photos and videos through their institutional website at <http://www.redcross.bg>.

The IFRC Europe Zone Office Communications Department and the BRC's Public Relations Department maintain a constant flow of information. Activities carried out by the Bulgarian Red Cross are regularly published on the BRC's institutional website and some information is now available in the IFRC blog. Also, media releases can be found on the IFRC's media site.

The IFRC Secretariat and Bulgarian Red Cross are aiming at the development of a harmonized communication strategy which will target key stakeholders including the media, National Societies, and prospective donors.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring will be undertaken by the Disaster Preparedness/Disaster Response Department in conjunction with branch directors of the Bulgarian Red Cross and their partners. Field visits will be undertaken to verify the receipt of the vouchers by the affected population. The distribution is made exclusively by RC staff who are reaching the final beneficiaries personally. The operation report contains data on the distribution.

Throughout the distribution of the vouchers to the beneficiaries, an ongoing evaluation of activities will be undertaken and reported at regular Bulgarian Red Cross meetings. It is planned to hold a beneficiary satisfaction survey when the situation in the affected areas allows it.

The BRC is planning evaluation and monitoring visits and workshops for all the stakeholders of the organization in order to guarantee a smooth and clear flow of the operation. A final training for evaluation, shared findings and lessons learned is also planned.

Narrative and financial reports will be produced according to the IFRC's requirements.

Administration and Finance

BRC has well-functioning financial and logistics systems for procurement procedures. An internal audit system is also in place, and the Finance Department is constantly monitored and analyzed. BRC will conclude contracts with local traders, and the traders will be given lists with the names of the eligible beneficiaries. Payments will be executed on a monthly basis to the traders against submitted vouchers and verification documents. Monthly monitoring visits will be organized.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF OPERATION

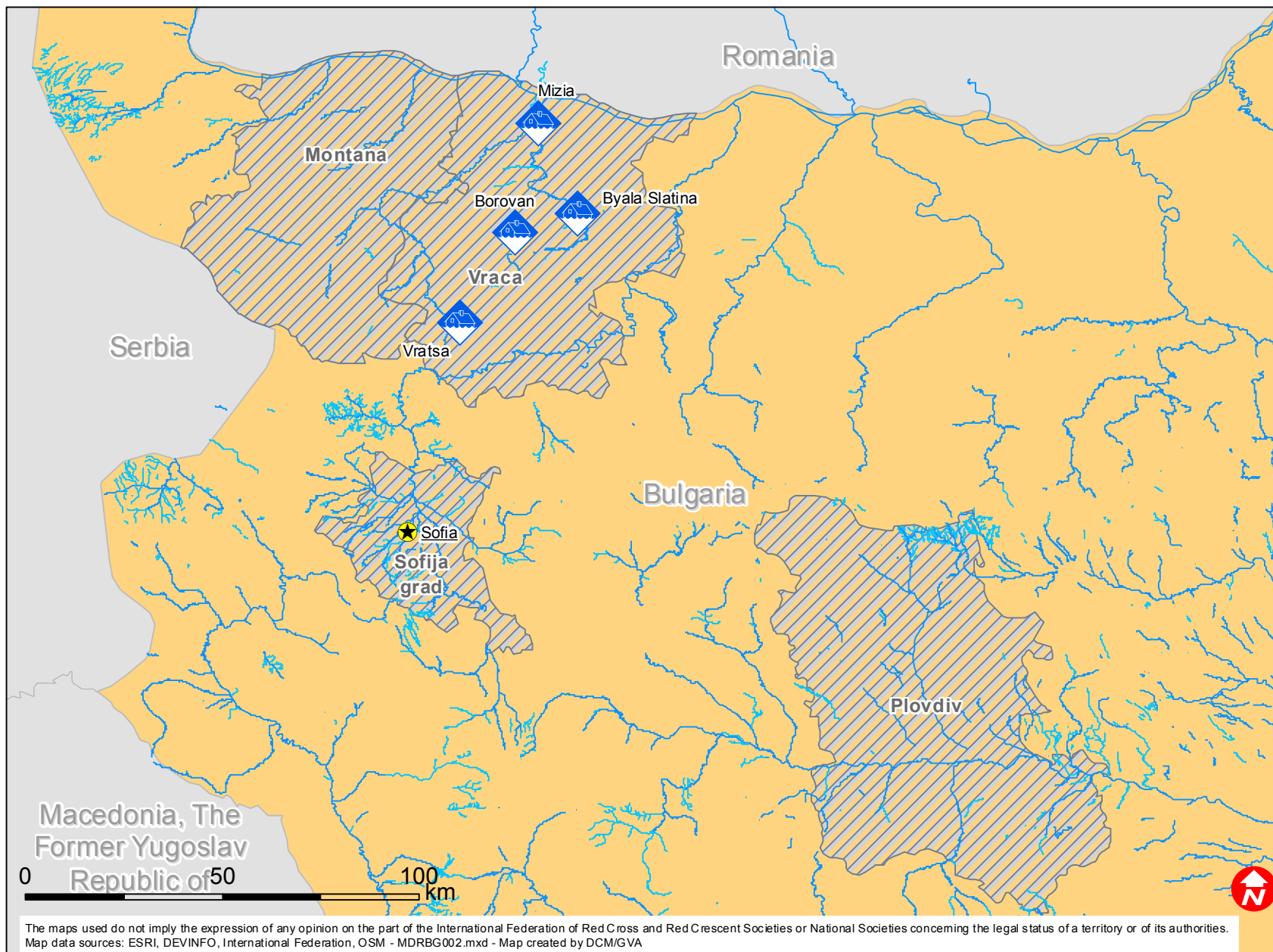
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BULGARIA

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	21,196
Food	
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	614
Other Supplies & Services	
Cash Disbursements	241,510
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	263,319
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	4,000
Transport & Vehicle Costs	1,500
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	5,500
International Staff	
National Staff	
National Society Staff	1,200
Volunteers	2,000
Total PERSONNEL	3,200
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	
Office Costs	300
Communications	450
Financial Charges	200
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	950
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Services Support Recovery	17,743
Total INDIRECT COSTS	17,743
TOTAL BUDGET	290,712



Bulgaria: Floods



Affected population in Vrasta



Affected regions