

# BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SLOVENIAN RED CROSS

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*The SRC shall help prevent and alleviate human suffering, protect life and health, promote healthy life by being active and guarantee the respect of human rights, especially during armed conflicts, natural disasters and other cases of emergency.*

# INTRODUCTION

The **Slovenian Red Cross** as an independent national society grew from the insights, will, efforts and work of numerous generations of Red Cross members in Slovenia. Among almost one hundred humanitarian organizations in Slovenia, the Slovenian Red Cross is the most recognizable. One of the important pillars of the Slovenian Red Cross reputation is an intact tradition of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and consistent implementation of **the Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality**. Furthermore, the amazing results that no other humanitarian organization in Slovenia can achieve in such a large scope and reach speak for itself. The Slovenian Red Cross irreplaceable contribution towards health and prosperity of Slovenians is vividly shown in implementation of public programs such as: **Blood Donation; First Aid; Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Response and in strong Social Welfare activities**.

Some figures that might illustrate the role of SRC in society better: yearly, more than 10% of the population receives assistance by Slovenian Red Cross; **almost 100.000 Blood Donors help in saving numerous lives; more than 15.000 children spent healthy and worry free holidays by the sea in the Slovenian Red Cross Youth and Health Resort Debeli rtič**. All this is possible due to more than **13.000 Red Cross volunteers**, who yearly accomplish more than **500.000 hours of voluntary work**.

Each specific time in history is challenging the Slovenian Red Cross with specific tasks. Since 2015 the priorities are additional **social welfare care** for the most jeopardize and vulnerable (**children, youngsters, elderly, sick, handicapped, homeless, Roma and addicts**) have been set; stronger media activity in order to raise general public's awareness for humanity and solidarity; to rejuvenate network of our members and due to ever more worrying climate changes – higher attention for environmental issues.

The Slovenian Red Cross is striving to achieve synergic results of volunteerism at home, while it will continue - as integral part of world-wide Red Cross family - to spring to assistance to a sister NS in need. As we have done in recent years in case of **Pakistan, Darfur, Sri Lanka, Haiti, floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia** – and show our compliance with principle of solidarity and at the same time generosity of Slovenian society.

## I. SHORTLY ABOUT SLOVENIAN RED CROSS

### History

The origins of Slovenian Red Cross lies over **150 years ago**, in the year of 1866, when **'Women Association for assistance to wounded and sick soldiers'** was established in

Ljubljana. Ever since the Red Cross in Slovenia works uninterruptedly - in war as in peacetime. Red Cross in Slovenia was for more than a century long organized as part of Austro-Hungarian Empire, Kingdom of SHS and of former Yugoslavia. In nineties, after the independence of Republic of Slovenia, Slovenian Red Cross started to act as independent National Society and was on 25th August 1993 officially recognized by International Committee of Red Cross and therefore admitted as an equal National Society into the worldwide Movement of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

#### **In the past 25 years**

- + 23,000 first aid courses by the Slovenian Red Cross (SRC), attended by 335,000 drivers or nearly 15,000 a year.
- + 2.5 million blood donations, a number that exceeds Slovenia's population, and averages at 106,338 donations a year. These selfless individuals guaranteed that Slovenia always had enough blood.
- + SRC distributed 45,000 tonnes of aid (food, toiletries, clothes) or 1,800 tons a year in order to help alleviate the distress of others.
- + 820,000 individuals, or one in every three Slovenians (33,000 a year), visited SRC locations.
- + 939,708 elderly (44,748 a year) took part in SRC meetings.
- + 800,000 elderly (33,000 a year) received visits at home by SRC volunteers.
- + 95,000 Roma (3,800 a year) received various types of SRC aid.
- + 10,000 homeless (500 a year) received various types of SRC aid.
- + 35,000 activities and projects (1,400 a year) were carried out in the area of addiction prevention.
- + 35,000 children (1,400 a year) spent their holidays through SRC programmes at the Debeli rtič and Frankopan Punat facilities.
- + 70,000 healthcare holidays for children (3,000 a year) have been organised by the SRC at the Debeli rtič and Frankopan Punat facilities.

#### **Structure**

The Slovenian Red Cross – Federation of Associations is an independent humanitarian volunteer Federation of Red Cross Associations. It acts on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia on the principle of unity and in accordance with the Law on the Slovenian Red Cross, the Law on Societies, the Law on humanitarian organizations, the Geneva Conventions and two supplementary protocols, the Statute of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the SRC Statute.

SRC is composed out of **56 Local Branches**, covering one to three local municipalities with the network spread over **887 local organization**, that are run by our committed volunteers. In June 1956, the Slovenian Red Cross established a resort to support and promote youth health and wellness. Officially named **“Youth health and Summer resort of the Red Cross Slovenia Debeli rtič”** and known by its nickname, “Debeli

rtič”, the resort facilitates activities which aim at contributing to the cure and prevention of health conditions amongst children and youth. An added bonus is that the resort is located on the Adriatic coast!

## **Decision – making structures**

### Governance

The supreme body of the SRC is the General Assembly, composed of local association representatives, who represent the interests of their local associations.

**President and representative of the SRC is Mrs Vesna Mikuž.**

**The Governing Board** (Main Committee) has – within decisions, general guidelines and work programme of the SRC adopted by the **General Assembly** – all powers required to fulfil the tasks and set objectives of the SRC. Governing Board (Main Committee) has an operational executive body – **Executive Board**. Permanent supervision of financial-material management of the SRC and monitoring of how the bodies and officials work, as well as to control the compliance of their work with the provisions of the Statute, accounting standards and other applicable regulations in this field is a function performed by the Supervisory Committee.

### Management

**The Secretary General of the SRC, Mrs Cvetka Tomin** (since December 2018), is the executive official of the SRC and is responsible for the implementation of guidelines and decisions of the Assembly, the Main Committee, the Executive Board and the Supervisory Committee of the SRC. In order to fulfil all the objectives set by General Assembly there are **professional services set at headquarters (program managers and supporting functions) and at SRC Youth and Health Resort**, supported by at least one employee in each out of 56 Local Branches.

## **SRC Legislation**

SRC is acting in compliance with the **Law on the Slovenian Red Cross**, adopted in 1993 and amended in 2010, **the Law on Societies**, adopted in 2006, the Law on humanitarian organizations adopted in 2003 and with SRC Statute, adopted in 2012 and amended in 2013, 2014.

## **II. SLOVENIAN RED CROSS ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1. PUBLIC AUTHORIZATION ACTIVITIES**

Based on **the Law on the Slovenian Red Cross** (Article 9) the Slovenian Red Cross carries out tasks in

the following fields as a public authorization:

- tracing service
- First aid
- Blood donation
- Disaster preparedness and disaster response.

### **2.1.1. TRACING SERVICE (TS)**

When **SRC Tracing Service** just began its independent steps, in June 1991, it immediately faced huge challenges. With war bursting out in Slovenia, followed by the war on Balkans (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina), SRC TS established centralized register of all refugees within Slovenia. In 1992, SRC has registered more than **51.000 refugees**. In the same year, SRC TS transmitted to and from conflict areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina **105.809 Red Cross messages**.

Today, in peacetime, the SRC TS is issuing certificates based on its own records and archives, renders accessible documents from the International TS in Arolsen. It also inquires on the whereabouts of missing persons in emergency situations in other countries, cooperates in reunification of families separated by armed conflicts through the **Central Tracing Agencies**, it collects and distributes RC messages from and to affected areas, **keeps records of refugees and internally displaced persons**.

Besides, above-mentioned tasks one of the SRC priorities has always been to train and qualify personnel in order to carry out TS activities.

### **2.1.2. FIRST AID (FA)**

SRC is striving to implement various programs targeted at **different focus groups (students, young drivers, doctors, FA teams, maskers, companies, water rescues...)**, on the highest quality level and in accordance to the doctrine, developed by the **Expert Center for FA acting at SRC**.

One of the important goals for SRC is also **to reaffirm the FA knowledge as obligatory for elementary school pupils** and therefore SRC organises a special courses for teachers, as well as Annual National Competition for Elementary Schools First Aid Teams. SRC priority is and will remain constantly raising awareness of the importance of accurate first aid knowledge among public in Slovenia. Despite the 26.000 individuals, who completed different courses in last year, there is still a need for more various programs, as well as for numerous actions all around Slovenia in order to fulfil our goal – fast, efficient and quality First Aid in any emergency it might occur.

SRC also started with formation of **RC FA teams** in each out of 56 Local Branches, thus ensuring an important segment in case of natural disasters, which might occur. Currently there are 80 First Aid teams established within SRC. Several years ago, SRC introduced First Aid to the elementary school pupils, today resulting in more than 100 Elementary School First Aid teams with young volunteers across Slovenia.

**In 2016, SRC organized First Aid Convention in Europe (FACE).** The best European Red Cross teams arrived to test their onsite skills and abilities at simulations of various life-threatening situations, in the year that we celebrate 150 years of successfully facing various challenges. The event has been organized in the area of and in cooperation with the FACE 2016 sponsor City Municipality of Ljubljana, and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Slovenia, the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Slovenia.

### **2.1.3. BLOOD DONATION**

In Slovenia, merely SRC is performing fundamental tasks such as motivating, recruiting and retaining blood donors and organizing blood donor's actions – since 1953. In line with the fact that in Slovenia Blood Donation is a non-remunerated activity and that in accordance to statistics every 5 minutes somebody in Slovenia is in need of blood, SRC in average organizes more than **1.150 blood donors' actions yearly**. This includes 380 field drives and motivates more than **62.000 regular individual Blood Donors**, thus ensuring a sufficient blood supply. Based on the data and experiences it is safe to claim that Blood Donation is the biggest act of solidarity in Slovenia. Today SRC priority is to motivate younger population to become blood donors and to raise, on national level, the number of blood donors for 10%. Despite public authorization given to SRC there is constant and close cooperation established with Ministry of Health, Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia and various other institutions and companies.

### **2.1.4. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS and DISASTER RESPONSE**

SRC is an integral part of National Protection System and is therefore in close cooperation with **Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief at Ministry of Defence**. SRC is responsible for implementation of health measures for affected population in case of natural or other disasters; for admission, accommodation and supplying the affected population; for coordination and shipment of the humanitarian aid and nevertheless for training of volunteers in order to fulfil the tasks stated in GC. In order to fulfil the task of admission, accommodation and supplying the affected population in cases of disaster, SRC has four mobile units, equally covering territory of Slovenia; each of them with capacity to accept 100 people. Besides heavy rains, thus

causing floods in major part of the country, the sleet, rather unknown type of natural disaster, heavily affected Slovenia in 2014. SRC has immediately reacted and dedicated 329.900 EUR for the assistance of disaster victims. Funds, raised through public fundraising campaign as well, were according to the DM rules and procedures and based on needs prioritization, distributed to 1.395 beneficiaries. In June 2018 heavy hail in surroundings of Črnomelj and Semič in Bela krajina caused bad damage on the roofs and buildings.

## **XH2O**

**The European Commission** has co-founded the project that aimed of increasing preparedness capacities of the EU civil protection mechanism regarding the rising number of hydro meteorological disasters. **The Austrian Red Cross coordinated XH2O**, supported by its project partners the Croatian Red Cross and the Slovenian Red Cross. The overall goal of XH2O was to set up a multinational cross border Water Purification Module (WPM) according to the standards of the European Commission. In order to ensure fast and efficient deployment during a time span of about 12 weeks additional staff training and water purification equipment was purchased. Thus the XH2O project leads to a faster and more efficient response of the EU civil protection mechanism in future disasters with special focus on the identification, dissemination and learning effects of this project.

## **PFACE**

**In April 2017, SRC joined PFACE project, led by Austrian Red Cross.** Partners in the project are also University of Innsbruck, Italian Red Cross, Croatian Red Cross, Macedonian Red Cross and Red Cross of Serbia. **The project aims to improve:**

- involvement and active participation of affected communities, families and groups in emergency response by training of staff and volunteers and by developing community activation,
- coordination and support for new volunteer types such as convergent volunteers and spontaneous volunteers,
- experience exchange and networking regarding long lasting repeated and ongoing disasters, like earthquakes, flooding and the migrant crisis in Europe.

In June 2018, SRC hosted working meeting of the PFACE staff in Brdo pri Kranju.

## **ESIRAS SLOVENIA**

**In January 2018, the Slovenian Red Cross launched the ESIRAS Slovenia project -** Employability and Social Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (ESIRAS) with its main office in Ljubljana. The period of the project is 18 months - from first of January 2018 to June 2019. In June 2018, SRC opened its branch office in Maribor. Project offers asylum seekers and persons with recognized international protection support in improving employment prospects and conditions of social integration. The International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion developed the project. **The European Union Employment and Social Innovation Program (EaSI) co-funds the project.** Seven EWU national societies are implementing the project - Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Italy, Great Britain and Slovenia. The main coordinator of the project is the Red Cross of Spain. Project beneficiaries participate in various project activities and with the members of the project team individually look for the best solutions. At the same time, access to other services of the Red Cross of Slovenia is possible, family members association. The project by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

## **SUPPORT IN CASES OF VIOLENCE**

The Slovenian Red Cross has in October 2018, as part of its ESIRAS Office, begun implementing a project **Psychosocial support and counselling in field of violence and gender based violence**, which came into fruition in cooperation with **United Nations High Commissionaire Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** and will last until end of December 2018. The trained professionals from EMMA Institute with support from interpreters and volunteers of the Slovenian Red Cross implement the project that offers workshops and counselling in the field of violence and gender-based violence. Workshops take place at accommodation place of the asylum seekers and persons granted international protection and also at some other locations provided by Slovenian Red Cross. Purpose of the workshops is giving concrete and useful information on prevention and response to violence and gender based violence. Individual counselling and support are part of the project.

## **2.2. HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS**

### **2.2.1. HEALTH PROGRAM**

Every year SRC organizes over **100 lectures, quizzes, round tables and other different activities with topics of health life-style**, thus emphasizing the importance of care for our health. Activities are set in a way to target as large population as possible, with a special focus on youngsters. SRC volunteer distribute thousands of health education materials each year tackling topics such as: **fight against tobacco, drugs, alcohol; HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, etc.** SRC is active in different international platforms in order to substantially contribute to development of policies, awareness campaigns and various partnerships. One of the very successful and firm partnerships was within the **EU Road Safety campaign** that has been implemented by SRC LBs.

### **2.2.2. CARE FOR ELDERLY**

Care for Elderly is one of SRC priorities, while Slovenia is one of the countries with the

fastest growing old population. **SRC organizes numerous activities for elderly and provides free holidaymaking for socially threatened elderly at SRC Resort Debeli rtic.** SRC also provided specific education of volunteers, who act as leaders of intergenerational self-help groups, organized throughout of Slovenia. SRC also organizes free holidaymaking for 334 elderly people from socially deprived environment in SRC Youth and Health Resort Debeli rtic.

### **2.2.3. SOCIAL WELFARE**

Deriving from RC mandate SRCs' priority is certainly care and assistance to less privileged individuals and families more over to socially threatened individuals and families with **special attention to children, elderly; sick and lonely people; to homeless; Roma and addicts.** The Slovenian Red Cross last year provided material assistance from national level to more than 130.000 socially threatened individuals, while Local Branches have provided extra assistance from their own incomes as well. SRC is also offering assistance in form of clothes, shoes and furniture. SRC also organizes free holidaymaking for more than 1400 children yearly from socially deprived families in **SRC Youth and Health Resort Debeli rtic**, in which **yearly 15.000 children all together spent part of their holidays.**

Since 2014 the SRC partners in implementation of the **Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD)** in Slovenia not only by offering assistance to people living with poverty and social exclusion but also by implementing accompanying measures that can play the critical role in addressing the social exclusion. SRC provides support in different ways, depending on the specific needs of the person. Activities range from basic material assistance such as food, clothing and shelter, to advice and counselling regarding family, social, health or legal issues, as well as support in accessing services and employment, housing and social care. Quite often, it is a combination of different services.

### **2.2.4. YOUTH PROGRAM**

SRC has numerous activities targeted at youngsters, one of the most spread and recognized being RC School Circles. **Youth is engaged in activities of Local Branches in all areas of our work**, while they represent a backbone of a very successful awareness and fundraising campaign '**Hunger day**'. In the campaign they are raising the awareness of poor malnutrition and poverty among the people of their age (school mates, friends,..) and are at the same time raising funds for a warm meal for socially threatened pupils attending their school.

In 2011, SRC joined '**Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change**' initiative of International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and successfully carried out a pilot project within 10 Local Branches. Based on lessons learned and

recommended adaptation of YABC programme it has been spreaded to the whole SRC network.

## **2.2.5. PROGRAMS in COOPERATION WITH MOVEMENT**

### *2.2.5.1. Dissemination*

Dissemination activities on RC/RC Movement (history; fundamental principles; components of the Movement; Emblem and International Humanitarian Law) go on across the local branches and on the national level. **Yearly SRC organizes more than 200 seminars/workshops/lectures for disseminators, with more than 3.000 participants.** At least once per year an induction course for new volunteers and RC professionals (LB Secretaries) is also organized. There is a very fruitful cooperation established with CIMIC and Police Forces as well, who are participating in Operations in Support to Peace. SRC offers Dissemination lectures for our partners at Ministries and Mayors in the local communities. We have also achieved to protect Law on Emblem with the amended Law on Slovenian Red Cross (2011).

### *2.2.5.2. Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL)*

In the past years, SRC has been highly involved in implementing the **'Exploring Humanitarian Law' into Slovenian Elementary and High Schools.** There were significant milestones set in regard to EHL. Strong cooperation was established between Ministry of Education and Sports, ICRC and SRC, results in signed trilateral Memorandum of Understanding, successful pilot testing, teachers training and finally EHL becoming an integral part of **Civic Education curricula in all 450 elementary schools across Slovenia.** SRC and representatives of National Educational Institute of the Slovenia are very active in participation to regional meetings, conferences and teachers training in order to share the experiences and actively work on the Slovenian strategy for EHL implementation.

## **2.3 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

### **2.3.1. Tsunami in South East Asia – Renovation of Elementary School in Sri Lanka (2004 – 2008)**

Immediately after Tsunami hit SE Asia SRC published an Appeal and with the generosity of Slovenians gathered 345.000 EUR. SRC has transferred half of the funds to IFRC, whilst another allocated into a joint project – renovation of Elementary School in Sri Lanka - of UNICEF Slovenia, Karitas Slovenia, Foundation Together and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by Slovenian Red Cross. 740 pupils attend the Elementary School, based in the poorest area of Colombo, from 1st up to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The plan is to conclude the project in April 2008 with the support of Finish Red Cross, who assured the missing funds for complete school renovation.

### **2.3.2. Pakistan Earthquake – Assistance to affected population (2005 – 2006)**

In order to assist the earthquake victims in Pakistan, SRC made a special fundraising campaign, where donators had a possibility to sponsor a sleeping bag for Pakistanis. Altogether 170.000 EUR were raised, equal to 10.000 sleeping bags sent to the affected area.

### **2.3.3. World for Darfur (2006)**

On the initiative of Dr. Janez Drnovšek, former President of Slovenia, the biggest humanitarian organization in Slovenia, made a joint humanitarian action for families in Darfur, affected by armed conflict. The main goal of the public campaign was to raise public awareness of one of the biggest manmade catastrophes of these times, due to which 3.5 million of refugees and internally displaced people are struggling for their survival. In one of the biggest campaigns in Slovenia humanitarian organizations together raised 870.000 EUR, that were sent to their international components present in Darfur. SRC transferred the raised money to the ICRC. ICRC throughout campaign offered a substantial support by providing relevant information from the field.

### **2.3.4. Bangladesh Cylon (2007)**

SRC has through IFRC transferred 20.000 EUR to affected population in Bangladesh.

### **2.3.5. Haiti, Chile, Pakistan (2010)**

SRC has through IFRC transferred 80.000 EUR to affected population in above countries.

### **2.3.6. Japan (2011)**

SRC has through IFRC transferred 80.000 EUR to affected population in above countries.

### **2.3.7. Typhoon Haiyan Philippines (2013)**

SRC has through IFRC transferred 25.000 EUR to affected population in above countries.

### **2.3.8. Floods in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (2014)**

SRC has on bilateral grounds transferred 13.100 EUR to affected population in Croatia, 220.000 EUR to Bosnia and Herzegovina and 192.600 to Serbia.

### **2.3.9 Nepal earthquake (2015)**

In 2015 an earthquake strike Nepal and caused great damage. SRC reacted and therefore dedicated 80.128, 62 EUR for the assistance of earthquake victims.

### **2.3.10 Macedonia floods (2015 and 2016)**

In 2015 and 2016, floods affected Macedonia. Many homes remain flooded or even collapsed. SRC helped and dedicated 8.140 EUR for the assistance of disaster victims.