



# GREECE

IFRC network mid-year report, January – June 2023

15 December 2023



## IN SUPPORT OF THE HELLENIC RED CROSS



**86**

National Society branches



**544**

National Society staff



**4,478**

National Society volunteers

[Click here for more financial information](#)

Appeal number **MAAGR001**

# OVERALL PROGRESS

## Context

Greece faces a range of humanitarian challenges, from financial and climate 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 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, among other adverse effects. According to the [World Population Review](#), this is creating a cyclical effect of population decline.

Greece has been a member of the European Union (EU) since 1981. In June 2023, the conservative New Democracy party won the national elections for the second time in a row.

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 humanitarian needs. The Greek economy has since suffered the most prolonged 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 hit again by the major international economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had severely affected one of the main country's economic sectors, tourism. 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, 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, with an average unemployment rate of 6.8 per cent. Eurostat's data also shows that Greece's inflation reached 12 per cent in June 2022. This is up from 10.5 per cent in May and to 9.1 per cent in April, which is the highest rate recorded in Greece in 29 years. The last time prices rose so rapidly was in December 1993.

Greece continues to grapple 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. These issues have created disparities in income, welfare and housing, all of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessary measures taken to contain the virus, and the cost of living issues linked to the armed conflict in Ukraine. With one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe, the devastating health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Greece particularly hard. It disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, including older people, those living in poverty and the irregular migrant population, heightening the difficulties these groups were already facing.

## Key achievements

During the reporting period January-June 2023, **the Hellenic Red Cross**, with the support of the IFRC network, achieved the following:

- Development of a simplified Early Action Protocol, an extreme heat readiness and response protocol was drafted during the first half of the year to mitigate the impact of climate change on populations at-risk.
- Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) lessons learned workshop in the first quarter and DREF lessons learned workshop debrief call. These were to review and discuss the key findings and to come up with concrete actions that can be taken forward in preparation for this year's wildfire season.

- Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) capacity building of the Hellenic Red Cross through peer-to-peer learning and accompaniment by the PMER officer from the country delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- A final operational report on population movement for Greece has been published. The final evaluation report, along with a summary for an external audience, were also produced.
- A proposal for application to the rapid response fund of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration was made for Greece (and Cyprus), with a focus on the Hellenic Red Cross' two multifunctional centres and its' accompanied referral programme.
- Hosting of the Europe region face-to-face consultation on the climate road map in Athens in early June 2023. This brought the technical reference group and steering committee together and succeeding in gathering strategic and technical direction for developing and validating the Europe Climate Road Map.
- EU4Health programme - IFRC's country delegation continued providing technical and administrative support to the National Society to be part of the regional health programme funded by the European Union.
- Continued efforts to advance the digitalisation journey of the National Society through the ongoing partnership with the 510 Initiative of the Netherlands Red Cross, fostering digital literacy and targeted investments in information management, and ensuring that appropriate tools and supports are in place to make the transition.
- Continued improvement in the Hellenic Red Cross' overall preparedness and readiness to respond to medium and large-scale emergencies through trainings, a DREF lessons learned workshop and development of standard operating procedures.
- The IFRC Secretary General's high-level visit to Athens in January 2023 to follow-up on the status agreement efforts and to seek insights from the National Society and local authorities into IFRC's future presence in Greece.
- The IFRC Regional Director for Europe's visit to Athens in June 2023 to follow-up on IFRC's future presence in Greece.
- Visit from the IFRC's Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to Greece during the second quarter of the year.
- Recruitment of a new staff member, a humanitarian diplomacy officer during the first quarter of the year.

## Changes and amendments

- Overall, progress was limited on some of the activities in the plan due to the overall lack of funding.
- No significant changes were made to the Unified Plan 2023. However, priorities have been adapted and realigned to reflect the IFRC country delegation's anticipated closure in December 2023.

# IFRC NETWORK ACTION

## ONGOING EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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

<b>Emergency Operation</b>	UKRAINE AND IMPACTED COUNTRIES CRISIS EMERGENCY APPEAL
<b>Appeal number</b>	MGR65002
<b>Duration</b>	46 months (28 February 2022 to 31 December 2025)
<b>Target areas</b>	Ukraine and impacted countries
<b>Funding requirement</b>	CHF 800 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 2.7 billion francs Federation-wide
<b>Link</b>	<a href="#">Ukraine and impacted countries crisis - Emergency Appeal</a> <a href="#">IFRC GO page: Greece</a>

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.

A [revised Emergency Appeal](#) was published on 10 May 2023, extending the timeframe of the operation until 31 December 2025, with a planned transition to Unified Country Planning covering all operations of National Societies after that date. It presented a substantial increase in people targeted, in the funding ask as well as in geographical coverage, to support National Societies in assisting people in Ukraine and other impacted countries affected by the crisis.

The [revised regional Operational Strategy](#), published on 20 June 2023, informs how IFRC is shifting its response from an emergency phase during 2022 to a protracted crisis scenario from 2023 onwards. This while recognizing the need to remain agile and proactive in what continues to be a highly dynamic environment, to be able to quickly adapt its response to the changing needs.

The Hellenic Red Cross has received funding through the Emergency Appeal enabling it to provide assistance to Ukrainian citizens arriving in Greece.

Follow this link to the most recent Operation Update: [MGR65002 Operation Update #8](#).

## SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



### Health & Care

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)

**Objective** *Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening*

The Hellenic Red Cross continues to support people displaced from Ukraine in accessing public services such as basic healthcare and holistic social services, and information as aid. Primary interventions delivered primary health care to 7,815 individuals.

Hygiene and health promotion activities reached 5,035 participants. The mobile health teams in Athens and in Thessaloniki organized campaigns and sessions specifically tailored for displaced mothers and children.

The ACCREF programme received nearly 420 requests for accompanying individuals to health appointments in the Ukrainian language.

The cycle of psycho-educational activities in Thessaloniki, continue to support children and young people displaced from Ukraine, focusing on the development of social skills and the strengthening of self-confidence, in order to better cope with the challenges of daily life. Additionally, in co-operation with the MFC, psychosocial support meetings have been designed for the elderly population of Ukraine.

Additionally, 524 displaced people from Ukraine were reached by Hellenic Red Cross with mental health and psychosocial support services and 199 through Individual sessions/ consultations with Ministry of Health professionals since the beginning of the operation.



## Protection, Gender and Inclusion

---

**Objective** *Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and to address their distinct needs*

Through the Emergency Appeal, 277 Hellenic Red Cross staff and volunteers actively participated in comprehensive protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) training sessions. These covered PGI definitions, code of conduct, child protection policies, and referral pathways, enhancing their knowledge and skills. Technical support meetings focused on reinforcing protection measures in Unaccompanied Minors Centres, through the network of focal points. Safeguarding principles were upheld through supervision meetings, and active engagement in various events, meetings, and working groups with other agencies, significantly contributed to collective efforts in safeguarding individuals.



## Community Engagement and Accountability

---

**Objective** *The diverse needs, priorities, and preferences of the affected communities guide the response through a people-centred approach and meaningful community participation*

The Hellenic Red Cross is actively continuing to provide feedback mechanisms to enhance community engagement. This includes the ongoing provision of feedback mechanisms, service satisfaction consultations and service analysis. This aims to expand channels for collecting complaints and implementing safeguarding mechanisms. Information material in the Ukrainian language is shared with relevant entities to facilitate communication with the Ukrainian communities in Greece.

The Hellenic Red Cross is committed to fostering two-way communication, utilizing participative methodologies to keep the community informed about actions taken in response to their concerns. Additionally, efforts involve identifying and expanding communication channels with the Ukrainian community through coordination with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Additionally, the Hellenic Red Cross continues community outreach and information provision, particularly through the mobile health team in Athens, offering migrants and refugees accurate information about rights and services through the MFC Hotline and Humanitarian Service Points in their native language.



## Migration

**Objective** *Communities support the needs of migrants and their families and those assisting migrants at all stages of migration (origin, transit and destination)*

The Hellenic Red Cross is strengthening six Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs) strategically located across Greece, including MFCs, EHSs, and MHTs. These HSPs, managed by Hellenic Red Cross's social welfare and health divisions, provide essential orientation, information, and social counseling to reduce barriers for displaced individuals. They facilitate access to integration, legal support, health care, education, and material needs allowance applications. Tailored assistance is offered to at-risk groups, addressing compounded needs such as disabilities, mental health issues and child welfare. This initiative underscores Hellenic Red Cross's commitment to holistic support for displaced populations.

Additionally, Hellenic Red Cross delivers legal advice and support to address migrants' inquiries, manage referrals, and provide timely information about rights and services in their native language. Through the MFC Hotline, the Hellenic Red Cross provides written translations and remote interpreting upon request, to support access to official procedures and aligning with its commitment to supporting the migrant community.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## Climate and environment

In preparation to respond to the ongoing climate crisis and the implications of extreme heat in Greece during summer, the IFRC, in agreement with the Hellenic Red Cross, fostered a partnership with the City of Athens, Chief Heat Officer. An extension of this partnership was promoted to include, under the Hellenic Red Cross leadership, the Municipality of Athens, the Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Observatory of Athens. Together, the Hellenic Red Cross, the IFRC and their partners have been exploring how to leverage the technical competencies and expertise of others in the National Society's climate programming linked to extreme heat.

The IFRC Greece team is supporting the Hellenic Red Cross with the development of an extreme heat readiness and response programme (via a simplified Early Action Protocol) to mitigate the impact of climate change on populations at-risk. As part of the simplified Early Action Protocol, the plan is to create and build on its existing awareness-raising activities on health risks related to climate change, to increase community resilience especially in communities at-risk.

In early June 2023, IFRC hosted a Europe region face-to-face consultation on the climate road map in Athens. The workshop was an essential touch point with National Societies in the region to frame how the IFRC network in the Europe region plans to collectively scale-up climate action by 2025 and beyond, based on broad consultations with the membership and relevant actors. The event in Athens succeeded in bringing the technical reference group and steering committee together, as well as gathering strategic and technical direction for developing and validating the Europe region roadmap for climate action.



## Disasters and crises

To improve Hellenic Red Cross' overall preparedness and readiness to respond to large-scale emergencies, the National Society and the IFRC conducted a DREF lessons learned workshop in January 2023.

The workshop was held to offer the Hellenic Red Cross and Participating National Societies (Croatian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Portuguese Red Cross) an opportunity to reflect and consider possible areas of success and improvement.

This exercise provided an opportunity to:

- Review and reflect on the Hellenic Red Cross' response to the devastating wildfires and what could be done differently or better next time.
- Assess current Hellenic Red Cross' abilities and capacity to set up emergency operations in small, medium and large-scale emergency contexts, particularly wildfire related.
- Learn and exchange ideas with other National Societies, responding to similar emergency situations, including floods.
- Reveal gaps and parts to be improved to strengthen future emergency response operations.
- Online peer-to-peer learning opportunities exchange with other National Societies (Croatian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Portuguese Red Cross).

In addition, the DREF lessons learned report was shared with the workshop's participants and a follow-up call on DREF lessons learned was organised.

Hellenic Red Cross proceeded with the deployment of equipment purchased under the DREF to relevant branches during the first quarter of 2023. This equipment is now in use.

The IFRC team enhanced support to the Hellenic Red Cross' funding needs through the DREF and Early Action systems and mechanisms, by increasing capacity in the National Society to apply for and report on the DREF. Support was also provided to the National Society on the use of IFRC tools such as Go Platform for updating with regular field reports when needed. An ROE online training of the IFRC PMER officer on new online DREF tools followed to secure and deepen the knowledge of the new system in place.

A DREF training for National Society staff is tentatively planned for the last quarter of 2023.



## Migration and displacement

---

The migration activities under the annual Unified Plan were planned to complement the ones under the Ukraine Emergency Appeal launched in October 2022, the EU4Health programme and the global route-based migration programme to respond to the growing needs of the migrants in Greece.

The Hellenic Red Cross has been providing primary health care services, psychosocial support, activities, and regular communication with communities based in migrants' sites and urban settings. Additionally, integration activities have been implemented through the Hellenic Red Cross' multifunctional centres in Athens and Thessaloniki. These act as humanitarian service points, with the provision of accurate information as well as social, legal and educational support.

In terms of health provision, the Hellenic Red Cross' mobile health teams have been visiting the Serres accommodation site and Promachonas site as well as covering some urban locations, providing primary health care and psychosocial support to vulnerable refugees and migrants. In the Attica region, the accompanied referral programme provides accompaniment of patients to health appointments to facilitate equal access to health services. At the same time, the three educational health stations in Athens continue providing primary health care to vulnerable community members within the urban area of Attica, such as refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied minors and migrants without social security, as well as vulnerable Greek citizens.

After securing funding through the Ukraine Emergency Appeal in October 2022, Hellenic Red Cross extended its mental health and psychosocial support services to people displaced by Ukraine's armed conflict through the educational health stations and mobile health teams, primarily in urban settings. The EU4Health programme will enable the continuation of these services.

In order to build the National Society's capacity to undertake humanitarian diplomacy, with a focus on the protection and assistance needs of migrants in Greece, and improve reception and integration conditions in Greece, IFRC and Hellenic Red Cross initiated scoping work at the multifunctional centres in Athens during the first quarter of 2023. Together they have been trying to leverage regional connections to undertake joint humanitarian diplomacy in line

with a route-based approach to migration. A humanitarian diplomacy training is planned during the last quarter of 2023 to enhance the capacity of the Hellenic Red Cross to undertake humanitarian diplomacy in Greece.

Hellenic Red Cross enhanced partnerships across the IFRC network and leveraged IFRC and the wider Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's technical capacity to support the National Society to respond to the needs of migrants in Greece. For example, through the Netherlands Red Cross' [510 Initiative](#), a customised system was put in place for the educational health stations to facilitate with data mapping and data collection, case information management, and information management with a focus on cash preparedness.

Hellenic Red Cross maintains an active collaboration with the ICRC. Communication is enhanced between the different technical sectors of the Hellenic Red Cross to ensure that the cross-cutting services of Restoring Family Links are mainstreamed across sector programmes. This assisted the National Society's response to the Pilos Shipwreck during the second quarter of 2023. The funding from the British Red Cross for Restoring Family Links activities and integration, launched during the second quarter, will ensure that activities contribute to a sustainable integration model after the exit of ICRC.

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS



### Strategic and operational coordination

#### Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

The IFRC continued strengthening its dialogue with Hellenic Red Cross in line with the strategic priorities for 2023 and beyond. This was both in terms of programme activities as well as support for the Hellenic Red Cross' institutional development and the related recovery plan.

The IFRC continued to strengthen coordination efforts during 2023, i.e., the internal coordination mechanisms among Movement actors (Hellenic Red Cross/ICRC and Participating National Societies), as well as externally with other key stakeholders (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, municipalities, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations).

To develop and reinforce Hellenic Red Cross' resource mobilization capacity to enhance financial sustainability and independence, technical staff from the regional office of Europe visited the Hellenic Red Cross for two weeks. They assessed the resource mobilization capacity of the National Society and the tools in place. Recommendations were provided and further communication is ongoing.



### National Society development

Peer-to-peer learning with other National Societies through engagement and IFRC networks has also enabled progress towards the 2023 National Society development. This included hosting the Europe region face-to-face consultation on climate road map in June 2023, a partnership with the Netherlands Red Cross' 510 Initiative for digitalisation, and the active participation of an Hellenic Red Cross board member (Vice President) in the Movement Induction Course in Budapest in May 2023.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

---

In an effort to build a strong public profile and effectively advocate and influence both public behaviour and policy change at the domestic, regional and global levels, the IFRC has planned to enhance the humanitarian diplomacy capacity of both the Hellenic Red Cross and the IFRC Greece country delegation through training, online learning and technical support. To achieve this goal, a humanitarian diplomacy officer joined the IFRC team in January 2023. Activities in this field included:

- Meetings with various Hellenic Red Cross teams, including the multifunctional centres, the educational health stations in Athens and the Restoring Family Links unit to access needs and discuss ways to work together.
- Meetings and presentations on the National Society's work as well as developments in the country around migration to stakeholders such as embassies, United Nations agencies, ministries and non-governmental organisations.
- Preparation of IFRC's key positions on climate for Europe, in collaboration with the Regional Office. National Societies, including the Hellenic Red Cross, will be able to use these messages to communicate a strong humanitarian case with stakeholders.
- Preparation of a humanitarian diplomacy workshop for the multifunctional centres, scheduled to take place in Athens at the beginning of October 2023. The aim of the workshop is to strengthen the humanitarian diplomacy capacity for the multifunctional centres' teams and align activities with other Red Cross offices, including the Red Cross EU Office in Brussels and the IFRC Regional Office in Budapest. Their representatives will join the training to exchange information and best practices.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

---

As mentioned above, the Hellenic Red Cross has made significant progress towards its digital transformation and development, reflected in partnership with the Netherlands Red Cross' 510 Initiative. A continuous effort can be seen on digitalisation of the National Society, fostering digital literacy and ensuring the appropriate tools and supports are in place.

The next step in the transformation of the technological capacity of Hellenic Red Cross is to have complete ownership of current information management tools without being dependent on another National Society or an external IT company for technological support. The handover of the systems in place is an ongoing activity, planned to be completed in the last quarter of the year. For this, a representative from the Netherlands Red Cross' 510 Initiative attended an in-person workshop with the National Society in Athens in July 2023.

In order to be accountable with agile management and a renewed financial model, the IFRC, jointly with Hellenic Red Cross, undertook the Working with Project Partners Transition Workshop (WWPP) during the first quarter of 2023, including a risk management component.

Through this workshop, IFRC introduced Hellenic Red Cross to the new working modality. The workshop covered the following:

- Familiarised Hellenic Red Cross staff with the new financial reporting requirements considering the WWPP transition.
- Introduced IFRC's minimum requirements for procurement under this new working modality.
- Introduced the latest tools, contracts and templates of this working modality.
- Provided orientation and capacity strengthening on key concepts in risk management considering the transfer of responsibility to the Hellenic Red Cross.

To further increase finance and procurement capacity, several trainings were delivered linked to working with project partners' transition:

- Training supported by the IFRC Regional Office for Europe in the first quarter on finance regarding WWPP.
- Training supported by the IFRC Regional Office for Europe in the second quarter on fraud, corruption and abuse.
- Technical support mission from the IFRC Regional Office for Europe in quarter two on procurement.



## The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 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.

### DATA SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- **Timeframe and alignment:** The reporting timeframe for this overview is covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2023. However, due to the diversity of the IFRC and differences in fiscal years, this coverage may not fully align for some National Societies. Mid-year reporting data may have been based on estimations, with plans to submit more robust numbers at the annual reporting stage.
- **Missing data and breakdowns:** National Societies have diverse data collection systems and processes that may not align with the standardized indicators. Data may not be available for some indicators, for some National Societies. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under or over-estimation of the efforts led by all.
- **Reporting bias:** The data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) and which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain.

### 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](#)
- [Evaluations database](#)

### 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 [redcross.gr](http://redcross.gr)