

ISSUE 5

JAN. - MAR. 2021

# Quarterly NEWSLETTER



HELLENIC RED CROSS



WE ARE ALWAYS THERE



## Message from the President of the HRC

Our strictly humanitarian work demands that we make steps forwards or else risk remaining in the former state which led the HRC down a dead-end path. Our goal is to reignite the awe which every Greek person felt for the Hellenic Red Cross through key humanitarian and human-centric actions, where it has always been a pioneer.

I desire a modern and innovative HRC that stands by each and every person suffering and in need of its support. I want a transparent, clean Hellenic Red Cross, perfectly efficient in its work and worthy of its glorious history, whose glamour still shines into the present. I want the Red Cross to be a symbol of humanity and solidarity, a safe

haven and guardian to our society.

Our primary concern is to strengthen social cohesion and social solidarity, to raise society's awareness about community marginalisation among various social groups and to educate young people about complex concepts, such as diversity, multiculturalism, humanitarian values, solidarity and volunteering.

Best Regards to all Red Crossers,

The President of the HRC

*Dr. Antonios Argerimos*

Pharmacist, Major General (Retired)



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# COVID-19

## The vast contribution of the Hellenic Red Cross in the fight against the pandemic

**From the start of the humanitarian crisis in Greece, the Hellenic Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (I.C.R.C.) and its 86 active Regional Branches throughout the country, has implemented a series of actions aimed at relieving citizens, with a particular focus on the vulnerable groups which have been severely stricken by the effects of the pandemic, including refugees, migrants, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and the homeless.**

Specifically, from the start of the pandemic, the HRC's teams have conducted more than 500,000 temperature screenings on people entering public spaces throughout the country, while its volunteers have actively contributed by carrying out a large number of rapid tests, in collaboration with the E.O.D.Y. (National Public Health Organization). In fact, from Monday, 22 March 2021, specialized teams from the Health Sector and volunteers of the HRC have begun conducting free rapid tests on the employees of the court buildings in Athens and other large cities around Greece, on a daily basis.

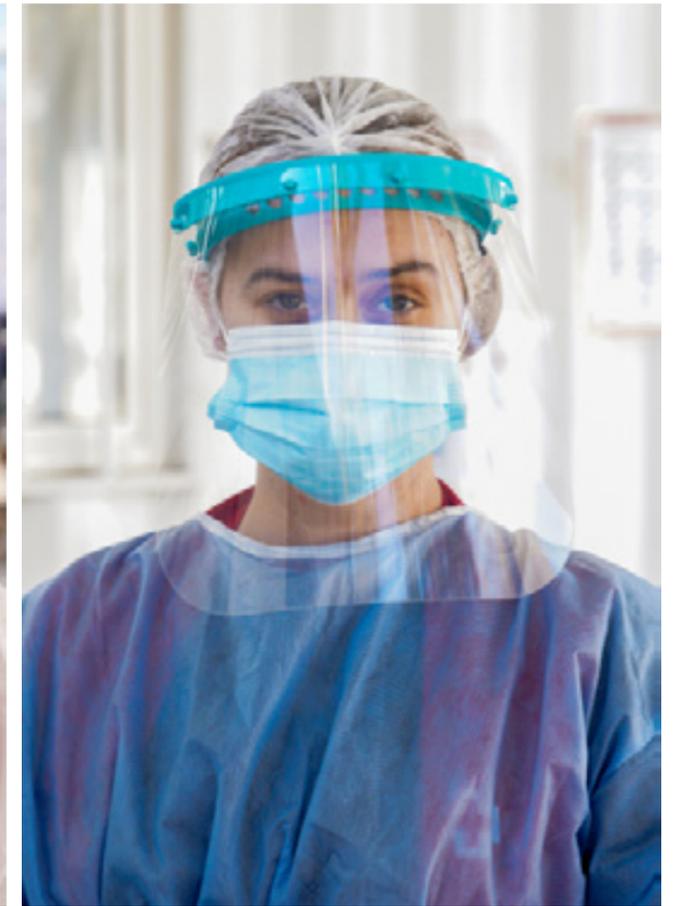
Furthermore, more than 19,400 people (infected - vulnerable

people under quarantine) have received 'Help at Home' via the Social Service of the HRC, while more than 11,300 people have sought out and received support from the Psychosocial Support service it provides.

Meanwhile, with our continuous and active streetwork, more than 1,000 homeless people have received support, with the HRC providing them with foodstuff, first aid, temperature screenings and crucial information for their protection against the coronavirus.

It should be noted that, during the recent extremely low temperatures, the HRC ensured the transport of elderly and isolated people to Covid-19 vaccination centres in Attica, an action which has now been extended and successfully implemented in other areas around the country. In addition, another action embraced by Greek society is the 'walking service for pets', in which volunteers walk the pets belonging to people affected or under quarantine due to Covid-19, as well as citizens from vulnerable groups.

The Hellenic Red Cross, taking account of the huge needs created within society due to the pandemic, is geared towards implementing even more actions in the following period, with the goal of improving the life of the vulnerable groups among the country's population.





# Standing by the earthquake victims of Elassona

Immediately after the severe earthquake which struck the broader region of Elassona, the Hellenic Red Cross, by order of the President, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, mobilized the volunteers of the Regional Branches of Larisa and Elassona, as well as volunteers from nearby areas, in order to aid in the release of trapped victims and to provide first aid wherever needed.

From the outset of the crisis, the volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross utilized their full potential, providing first aid in various incidents in the broader region, removing rocks and debris from streets and courtyards which posed a risk for pedestrians and vehicles, and blocking off any dangerous buildings.

### Fundraiser and Food Collection

The HRC has made another gesture of solidarity for people in need within the broader area of Elassona, by opening a bank account in support of earthquake victims, while also inviting people to collect long shelf life food, in order to enhance its efforts to provide sustenance for people whose homes have partially or completely collapsed and are temporarily living in open accom-

modation centres.

### Psychosocial Support to Victims

It is worth noting that a social worker of the HRC Regional Branch of Larisa, with a total of 32 volunteers from the Social Service of the HRC Regional Branch of Larisa are participating, on a daily basis, in supporting actions for the affected people who are temporarily living in Accommodation Centres for Earthquake Victims established in the communities of Vlachogianni, Praitori, Magoula, Amouri & Mesochori.

### Creative Activities for Children

The volunteers of the HRC specialized in Social Welfare are implementing creative activities & recreational actions (painting, artistic creations) with the participation of minors in specially configured areas, either in tents or outdoors, coordinating the organization of games and sports, taking care of the packaging and distribution of essential items for eligible families, while maintaining all necessary protection measures as stipulated by the health protocols established by the Greek State.



# “Medea” Storm Front

The Hellenic Red Cross, from the outset of the crisis caused by the Medea Storm Front which affected Attica, by order of the President Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, offered volunteers, personnel and the appropriate infrastructure at its disposal, in order to help with the emergency situation in the prefecture of Attica caused by the severe snowfall, particularly in the areas of the Northern Suburbs.

Tracked and rescue vehicles, operated by specialized personnel of the HRC, actively contributed—throughout the crisis—both in charting the areas affected most by the severe snowfall and in instances where residents and vehicles needed to be extracted, while also providing first aid and essential items to those who remained stranded in their homes.

At the same time, teams of the Hellenic Red Cross, despite the frost and the extremely low temperatures, carried out night patrols on a daily basis throughout Attica, focusing on the prefecture’s northern areas, in order to offer their valuable assistance wherever the need arose. Meanwhile, the HRC unabatedly contin-

ued transporting the elderly, people with mobility difficulties and isolated people to and from the vaccination centres in the prefecture of Attica.

Finally, despite the freezing temperatures and difficult conditions affecting the entire country, the Hellenic Red Cross once again stood by the homeless, approaching and supporting them through streetwork actions in downtown Athens, on Tuesday, 16 February.





## Relaunching the K9 Search and Rescue Team

At the initiative of the President, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, the K9 Search and Rescue Team of the Hellenic Red Cross has been re-launched.

**The purpose of the K9 Team is to assist the Hellenic Army, the Police and local authorities in search and rescue operations for missing persons, with the aim of expanding its activities to all parts of Greece.**

It is worth noting that the K9 Search and Rescue Team of

the HRC was recently reinforced with the purchase of two German Shepherd Dogs, which have already begun their basic training and will soon be joining the other certified dogs.

Even in this challenging period for the entire planet, our four-legged friends continue their training, participating in readiness exercises, which include search and rescue operations for persons in both indoor and outdoor areas, remaining ready to take action whenever the need may arise.



## Pet walking service

The HRC and its volunteers, acknowledging the difficulties faced by many people in managing the unprecedented circumstances caused by the pandemic, have created a 'Pet walking service', following the decision of Dr. Antonios Avgerinos and the K9 team of the HRC

The purpose of this action—in which volunteers of the HRC walk the pets belonging to people who are infected or under quarantine due to Covid-19, or to citizens from vulnerable

groups—is to uphold the welfare rules for all pets whose owners are unable to exit their homes due to the previous reasons.

This novel initiative gives our four-legged friends the chance to enjoy their necessary daily walk, lasting 30 to 60 minutes, and comes to further reinforce the work of the Hellenic Red Cross, which, throughout the difficult period of the pandemic, has been supporting the people who need us—in any way possible.



## Lesvos Reception and Identification

## Centre (RIC)

From the moment the Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) was created in Lesvos, the Hellenic Red Cross has honoured its commitment to help in any way possible, providing asylum seekers and migrants with humanitarian aid, as well as Primary Health Care Services, through the mobilization of the Mobile Health Unit of the HRC.

Since February 2021, the HRC has been providing Psychosocial Support Services to adult and children residing at the RIC with great zeal and enthusiasm, ensuring that their affairs are being properly handled, providing beneficiaries with information, guidance, counselling, psychological support and references, with the aim of offering emotional

relief, along with psychosocial and psychosomatic wellness. Moreover, water trucks that have been transporting water to the personal hygiene areas on a daily basis, ensuring hot water for more than 1,000 people. These areas have been operating with the contribution of the community volunteers, who have been trained on the subject of hy-

giene by the 'wash group' and are under the supervision of the German Red Cross. Lastly, various points at the centre have been fitted with taps that provide drinking water and are replenished by water trucks on a daily basis. Occupants at the centre use the taps for a variety of reasons, including hand-washing, clotheswashing, etc.



## Consistently By the Side of Greek Sports

In the preceding period, the HRC has extended and expanded the support it provides to the country's sporting activities, once again demonstrating its tangible support for sports.

In particular, the Hellenic Red Cross and Panathinaikos F.C. have extended their very successful humanitarian cooperation and are planning to implement even more joint initiatives, aimed at supporting sports and promoting the supreme value of volunteering.

The HRC, through the valuable contribution of its volunteers, will continue to provide health coverage at matches held by Panathinaikos, offering first aid services for the immediate treatment of any medical emergency.

The cooperation with Atromi-

tos F.C. was similarly extended recently, while a major voluntary blood donation is planned for the coming period in collaboration with Peristeri B.C.

### Memorandum of Cooperation with E.S.A.K.E.

In March, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with the Greek Basketball League (E.S.A.K.E.).

Under the new partnership, the HRC will offer health coverage at the games of the Stoiximan Basket League throughout Greece, along with training on First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) to the personnel of the E.S.A.K.E. and the K.A.E. and its members, as well as the relevant Training Certification which it provides, that is valid for five years.



## Major Online Workshop by the HRC in the midst of a pandemic

On Tuesday, 24 February, 2021, the Social Welfare Sector of the Hellenic Red Cross organised an Online Workshop, under the auspices of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou. The subject of the Workshop, which was a major success with a record turnout of 1,700 attendees, was: «The protection of vulnerable groups in the management of the mental effects of the pandemic – the contribution of the Hellenic Red Cross.»

At the start of event, the President of the HRC, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, noted: «On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Red Cross, I wish to thank you all for responding to our invitation and honouring us with your participation in our Workshop. I would, however, consider it a negation of any form of courtesy or respect if I did not extend my deepest gratitude to

the President of the Hellenic Republic, for her encouragement in organising the Workshop, which she immediately placed under her Auspices.»

The Workshop was saluted by the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Notis Mitarakis, the Minister of Citizen Protection, Michalis Christochoidis, the Deputy Minister of Health, Zoi Rapti, the Deputy Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Angelos Syrigos, the Director of the Registry of the Supreme Court, Aikaterini Fotopoulou, the Secretary General for Anti-Crime Policy, Sofia Nikolaou, and the Secretary General for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty, Georgios Stamatis.

The purpose of the workshop was to recognise and scientifically interpret the challenges arising from the pandemic, to

provide information and guidance, and to adopt best practices and techniques in order to prevent and manage the negative consequences of social isolation on mental health. The ultimate objective was to highlight the work of the Hellenic Red Cross, as a body dedicated to the protection and support of the population at a time of crisis, maintaining and promoting mental health, as well as the family and social life of individuals, families and communities.

The President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, made a moving speech, referring to the history, the high humanitarian values on which the Red Cross was founded, its contribution around the world and in every field, as well as the titanic efforts to alleviate human pain, the responsibility and sense of duty demonstrated by all who fight from within its ranks.

Υπό την αιγίδα της Α.Ε. της Προέδρου της Δημοκρατίας  
Κατερίνας Σακελλαροπούλου

ΔΙΑΔΙΚΤΥΑΚΗ ΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ  
Η προστασία των ευάλωτων ομάδων  
στη διαχείριση των ψυχικών  
επιπτώσεων της πανδημίας  
Η συμβολή του Ελληνικού  
Ερυθρού Σταυρού

ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ 24.02.2021 15:00 ΕΩΣ 18:30  
ΔΙΑΔΙΚΤΥΑΚΗ ΜΕΤΑΔΟΣΗ

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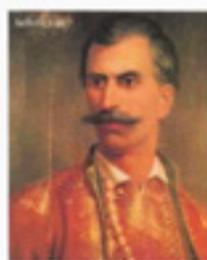
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