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ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΕΡΥΘΡΟΣ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ
HELLENIC RED CROSS

HELLENIC RED CROSS

WHEREVER THERE'S A NEED

#hellenicredcross

Message from the H.R.C. President

Dear Red Cross women,
Dear Red Cross men,

The ever-accelerating pace of life of the human community, with successive changes and modifications, shapes conditions that make vigilance and the full readiness of the Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.) necessary. Our presence must bridge the distance between our stable principles and human needs. We are ethically inspired by an idea and a vision: to transform into action the presence of the H.R.C. at the forefront, strengthening its historical course and its perspective in the current difficult international context. Through innovative social interventions and pioneering actions of preventive and therapeutic importance, we stand by people in need of immediate assistance who live in urban and peri-urban marginalized environments, providing a framework of protection and living.

The volume of activities, being excessive and vast, does not allow me to present it in more detail. From the Tracing Services of the Hellenic Red Cross to the encouragement of children's and youth participation in its activities, to climate change and ecology, our attention is focused on the essence of the extremely adverse social conditions. Conditions that make collective voluntary action necessary, expressed through a homogeneity of beliefs and values that take place within the Hellenic Red Cross.

With self-awareness and self-consciousness, we move forward in highlighting the essential role of the H.R.C. through the management and addressing of the problems of human society.

With Red Cross greetings,

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross

Dr. Antonios Avgerinos

Pharmasist, Retired Major General

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The H.R.C. was on the front line from the very first moment in the affected areas of Attica

The mobilization of the volunteer Samaritans – Rescuers of the Hellenic Red Cross was immediate in order to address the destruction caused by the severe weather that struck many areas of Attica.

Specifically, with rescue vehicles and water pumping equipment, a large team of volunteer Samaritans – Rescuers & Lifeguards was deployed to areas of Attica where roads and homes suffered extensive damage from the heavy rainfall.

• In Ano Glyfada, where the greatest damage occurred due to the torrent that hit the area, they created embankments at homes that were at risk from the rushing waters. At the same time, they visited affected homes door-to-door, assisting in water pumping and providing every possible help to citizens.

• At the Pikrodafni stream, in Agios Dimitrios, volunteers reinforced the placement of embankments alongside the stream, while also carrying out patrols to identify points where water had infiltrated.

• The H.R.C. rescue vehicles carried out continuous patrols in the affected areas of Moschato, providing support wherever it was deemed necessary.

The President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, met with the Prime Minister of Greece

A constructive discussion in a particularly warm atmosphere took place on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at the Maximos Mansion, between the President of the Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, and the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

During the meeting, the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, informed the Prime Minister about the multi-level, multidimensional and diverse humanitarian work carried out daily by the H.R.C., with its thousands of volunteers and staff across the country, for the benefit of Greek society. At the same time, he referred to the innovative actions it designs and implements both within and outside Greece, as well as to the regenerative course that the H.R.C. has charted and has been following in recent years.

The Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, made special reference to the outstanding presence of the H.R.C. Social Welfare volunteers who staff the highly successful "Patient Support Service in Emergency Departments (ED)" in hospitals of the 1st and 2nd Health Regions, which was created on his own initiative, offering valuable assistance to patients arriving at hospitals as well as to the National Health System as a whole.

The Hellenic Red Cross organized an Oath Ceremony and the Awarding of Diplomas & Promotions to 132 Volunteers of the Health Sector

In a particularly warm Red Cross atmosphere, on Monday, February 2, 2026, in the packed "Ioannis Kapodistrias" hall of the War Museum, the Hellenic Red Cross organized an Oath Ceremony and the Awarding of Diplomas & Promotions to 132 Volunteers of the Health Sector, in the presence of the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, the Secretary General Mr. Georgios Skoumas, and a large number of representatives of the country's political and state leadership.

Specifically, 75 new Health volunteers of the Athens Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross took their oath. At the same time, promotions were awarded to 57 H.R.C. Health volunteers, as a minimum reward for their decisive contribution to the work of the Organization, always guided by an expanded offer to all social groups.

The major H.R.C. event was honored by the presence of, and addresses were delivered by, the Very Reverend Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne and Representative of the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Father Ioannis Savvakis; the Representative of the President of the Hellenic Government and Deputy Minister of Social Cohesion & Family, Ms. Elena Rapti; the Minister of Health, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis; the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Mr. Thanos Plevris; the Deputy Ministers of Labour and Social Security, Mr. Kostas Karagkounis and Ms. Anna Efthymiou; and the Representative of the Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food, Mr. Giannis Andrianos, Ms. Sofia Arsenikou.

The H.R.C. marched first in the military parade of Athens for the celebration of the anniversary of March 25

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.) once again opened this year the grand military parade in Athens for the celebration of the anniversary of March 25, 1821, filling Red Cross women and men everywhere with emotion and pride, as they fight daily with all their strength to offer help to fellow human beings in need. Present at the parade were the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, and the Secretary General of the H.R.C., Mr. Georgios Skoumas.

The Hellenic Red Cross, the oldest humanitarian organization in the country, marched with staff and volunteers from all three of its Sectors (Health, Social Welfare, Samaritans Rescuers & Lifeguards), receiving warm applause from officials and the public gathered in Syntagma to honor the National Anniversary.

The H.R.C. implemented a preventive screening action for breast cancer and cervical cancer in women in detention at Korydallos II Correctional Facility

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), on the initiative of the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Nikitas Kaklamanis, and with specialized medical and nursing staff, possessing the necessary scientific knowledge and experience as well as the appropriate technological equipment, visited, on Thursday (5/3), the Korydallos II Correctional Facility in order to carry out preventive screening for breast cancer and educational programs on the health and hygiene of women in detention, in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Nikitas Kaklamanis, and the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos.

The initiative was carried out on the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Day and marked the beginning of a series of interventions focusing on women's health, empowerment, and equal access to prevention services. Within the framework of the programs, the participants were trained in breast self-examination and informed about breast cancer prevention, while at the same time clinical breast examination by a specialized physician was conducted, Pap tests were performed for the prevention of cervical cancer, and preventive screening was prescribed where necessary.

The excellent cooperation of the H.R.C. with the Health Service and the Directorate of the Correctional Facility ensured timely referral for further investigation or therapeutic intervention, where required. At the same time, through experiential training, educational models, audiovisual and printed material, emphasis was placed on strengthening health literacy and understanding basic prevention concepts.

Also present at the action were the Deputy Minister for Citizen Protection, Mr. Giannis Lampropoulos, the Member of Parliament of State and volunteer Samaritan – Rescuer, Mr. Giorgos Stamatis, and the Secretary General for Anti-Crime Policy, Mr. Aristeidis Perris.

The H.R.C. supports the survivors of the shipwreck in Chios

The volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross responded immediately to the call of the Hellenic Coast Guard to provide assistance to the 25 survivors (7 men, 7 women and 11 minors) of the shipwreck that occurred on the evening of Tuesday, February 3, 2026, off the coast of Chios and claimed the lives of 15 of our fellow human beings.

Specifically, the volunteers of the Chios Regional Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross were by their side from the very first moment, both at the port where the survivors disembarked, offering them First Aid, and at the General Hospital of Chios, where they were transferred for medical and pharmaceutical care. The H.R.C. volunteers provide psychosocial support and assistance, as well as the reconnection of children with their parents who are in different hospital wards. At the same time, they provided care and creative activities for the children.

The President of the H.R.C. at the 69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) of the United Nations

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.) and Vice President of the European Red Cross/Red Crescent Network (ERNA), Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, accompanied by the Head of International Relations and Partnerships, Ms. Thaleia Fonazaki, participated as a keynote speaker at the official Side Event of the 69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) of the United Nations, held in Vienna (9/3).

In his address, Dr. Avgerinos presented the pivotal role of the Hellenic Red Cross in bridging vulnerable and marginalized population groups with public health services, emphasizing the Organization's "dual identity" as a reliable partner of the State and at the same time a neutral humanitarian actor operating directly within communities, earning the trust of people who often lack access to care. At the same time, the President of the H.R.C. made extensive reference to the work of the H.R.C. Mobile Health Units, which in 2025 reached 8,530 individuals, conducting 990 tests for HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis, while also providing psychological first aid, psychosocial support, and immediate referrals to public health structures. He also pointed out that the Red Cross Emblem functions as a "gateway of trust" for people living on the street, using substances, or experiencing stigma, enabling the H.R.C. to reach them in environments where other actors find it difficult to enter.

In closing, in his capacity as Vice President of the ERNA network, he underlined that the Hellenic Red Cross, together with the European network, constitutes an experienced and reliable partner in shaping and implementing humanitarian drug policies at community level, "transforming the trust of communities into real pathways back to care, so that no one is left behind."

It is noted that, among others, the panel included the Head of the General Directorate of Public Health and Quality of Life of the Ministry of Health, Ms. Fotini Koulouri, and the Deputy President of the Prevention Centers "ATHINA – YGEIA" of the Municipality of Athens, Mr. Mario Atzemi.

The President of the H.R.C. participated in the Mediterranean Red Cross and Red Crescent Leadership Meeting

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, accompanied by the Head of International Relations and Partnerships, Ms. Thaleia Fonazaki, participated in the Mediterranean Red Cross & Red Crescent Leadership Meeting held in Acireale, Italy, from March 25 to 27, 2025, with the participation of 26 National Societies of the region. During the proceedings, there was a constructive exchange of views on the main geopolitical challenges and emerging trends affecting humanitarian work in the Mediterranean, examining changes in the operational environment and the new requirements these create for modern leadership.

Particular emphasis was placed on intergenerational dialogue with Youth representatives, highlighting the role of the new generation in innovation and in strengthening community resilience. At the same time, participants focused on translating strategic priorities into practical action, discussing ways to enhance regional cooperation and shape a more cohesive humanitarian space.

Through his three interventions, the President of the H.R.C. reaffirmed the Organization's firm commitment to contributing to the shaping of common solutions for current and future challenges, while also strengthening Mediterranean cooperation in view of the next meeting in Cyprus in 2027.

The H.R.C. conducted an impressive rescue exercise on sea and land with the use of a Super Puma helicopter of the Hellenic Air Force

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), within the framework of the continuous training of its volunteers, carried out on Friday (30/1) a large-scale rescue exercise on land and at sea, in the areas of Nea Peramos and Skourta, in which a Super Puma helicopter of the Hellenic Air Force participated, once again demonstrating the high level of operational readiness and preparedness of its volunteers and staff. The exercise, which took place in the presence of the President, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, involved volunteer Samaritans – Rescuers & Lifeguards from Patras and Athens, as well as a doctor and nursing staff of the Hellenic Red Cross.

The main part of the exercise took place off the coast of Nea Peramos, where multiple search and rescue scenarios for shipwreck victims were developed, using a rescue boat, jet ski, a trained lifeguard dog from the K-9 Search and Rescue Team, as well as the H.R.C.'s SONAR EMILY robotic system, which is used for searching missing persons in aquatic environments. Volunteer Samaritans – Rescuers & Lifeguards of the H.R.C., equipped with full diving gear, located and retrieved the submerged individuals, who were then airlifted by a Super Puma helicopter of the Hellenic Air Force.

Particular emphasis was also placed on the provision of First Aid in a serious case of hypothermia. A doctor and nursing staff of the Health Sector of the Hellenic Red Cross provided immediate and specialized care to the victim, who was safely transferred to a Mobile Health Unit of the H.R.C. for transport to a hospital.

Additionally, a mountain rescue scenario was carried out involving the evacuation and transport of a multi-trauma mountaineer from a particularly inaccessible location in the Skourta area. A team of volunteer Samaritans – Rescuers & Lifeguards of the Hellenic Red Cross operated with precision and speed, while the air evacuation of the injured person was carried out by a Super Puma helicopter of the Hellenic Air Force, confirming the excellent cooperation of the involved bodies.

The Hellenic Red Cross warmly thanks the Chief of the Hellenic Air Force General Staff, Lieutenant General (Air Force) Dimosthenis Grigoriadis, for the kind provision of the helicopter for the needs of the exercise, as well as the Merchant Marine Academy of Nea Michaniona for its participation.

The H.R.C. honored International Women's Day with a major event dedicated to "Women who inspire and shape today and tomorrow"

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), on the occasion of International Women's Day (8/3), successfully organized a celebratory event in the packed Ilissos Hall of the Divani Caravel Hotel, titled: "Women who inspire and shape today and tomorrow," in the presence of numerous representatives of the country's political and state leadership, the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, the Secretary General Mr. Georgios Skoumas, and volunteers from all Sectors of the H.R.C.

The aim of the event was to recognize the strength and contribution of the modern woman, as well as to acknowledge and highlight the timeless contribution of the female volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross, who, from 1877 to the present day, have consistently been on the front line of offering.

During the event, women who have made substantial contributions in different sectors of society were honored. Specifically, in the Health Sector, Ms. Matina Pagoni, Coordinating Director of the Internal Medicine Clinic of G.N.A. "G. Gennimatas," President of the Hellenic Society of Internal Medicine (EPE), and Vice President of the Federation of Associations of Hospital Doctors of Greece (OENGE); in the Philanthropy Sector, Ms. Klelia Hajiioannou, Entrepreneur and President of the "Klelia Hajiioannou Foundation"; in the Business Sector, Ms. Dimitra Katsafadou, Founder and Owner of the company "La Vie En Rose by Dimitra Katsafadou"; in Journalism, Ms. Fotini Georgiou, Health Journalist and Presenter at ANTENNA; and in Sports, Ms. Katerina Thanou, Olympic medalist in athletics and Squadron Leader of the Hellenic Air Force.

A greeting was delivered by the Representative of the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Government and Minister of Social Cohesion and Family, Ms. Domna Michailidou. The special H.R.C. event was also honored by the presence of and greetings delivered by the Minister of Health, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis, the Minister of Migration & Asylum, Mr. Thanos Plevris, the Member of Parliament Ms. Zoi Rapti, the Secretary General of Justice Mr. Pelops Laskos, and the President of Special Olympics Hellas Mr. Dionysis Kodellas.

The H.R.C. brought smiles to the young heroes of the Children's Oncology Hospital "Marianna V. Vardinogianni – ELPIDA"

The Hellenic Red Cross, on the occasion of the International Childhood and Adolescent Cancer Day (15/2), organized an action of support and solidarity for the children of the Children's Oncology Unit "Marianna V. Vardinogianni – ELPIDA," on Thursday, February 19, 2026, in the presence of the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, the President of the Children's Oncology Hospital "Marianna V. Vardinogianni – ELPIDA," Mr. Emmanouil Papasavvas, and the Deputy Director of the "Elpida" Guesthouse and Head of Psychosocial Support of the Children's Oncology Hospital "Marianna V. Vardinogianni – ELPIDA," Mr. Dimitris Nanis.

The action of the Social Welfare Sector of the H.R.C. aimed to offer hope, joy, and optimism to children who fight the disease every day, as well as to their families who experience its impact. The event program included a series of activities specially designed for children. The Theatre Group and the Animation Group of the Social Welfare Sector of the H.R.C. implemented creative workshops and theatrical games, enhancing the children's creativity and imagination. There was also the possibility of participation for children in the wards. Among the activities was the theatrical performance for children and adolescents titled "This year we give space to bloom: The group in the flowerbed develops deep roots!" by the Mobile Theatre Group of the H.R.C. Social Welfare Volunteers. In addition, crafts and interactive games were carried out to strengthen mental resilience by the Volunteers' Crafts Group, while music, treats, and gifts offered by the Volunteers created a special festive atmosphere for the children.

It is noted that the volunteers of the H.R.C. Social Welfare Sector have been by the side of the children and their families on a daily basis since 2003, providing support and care through psychosocial support actions at the ELPIDA Guesthouse of the Association of Friends of Children with Cancer, strengthening their strength and courage in their daily struggle for life.

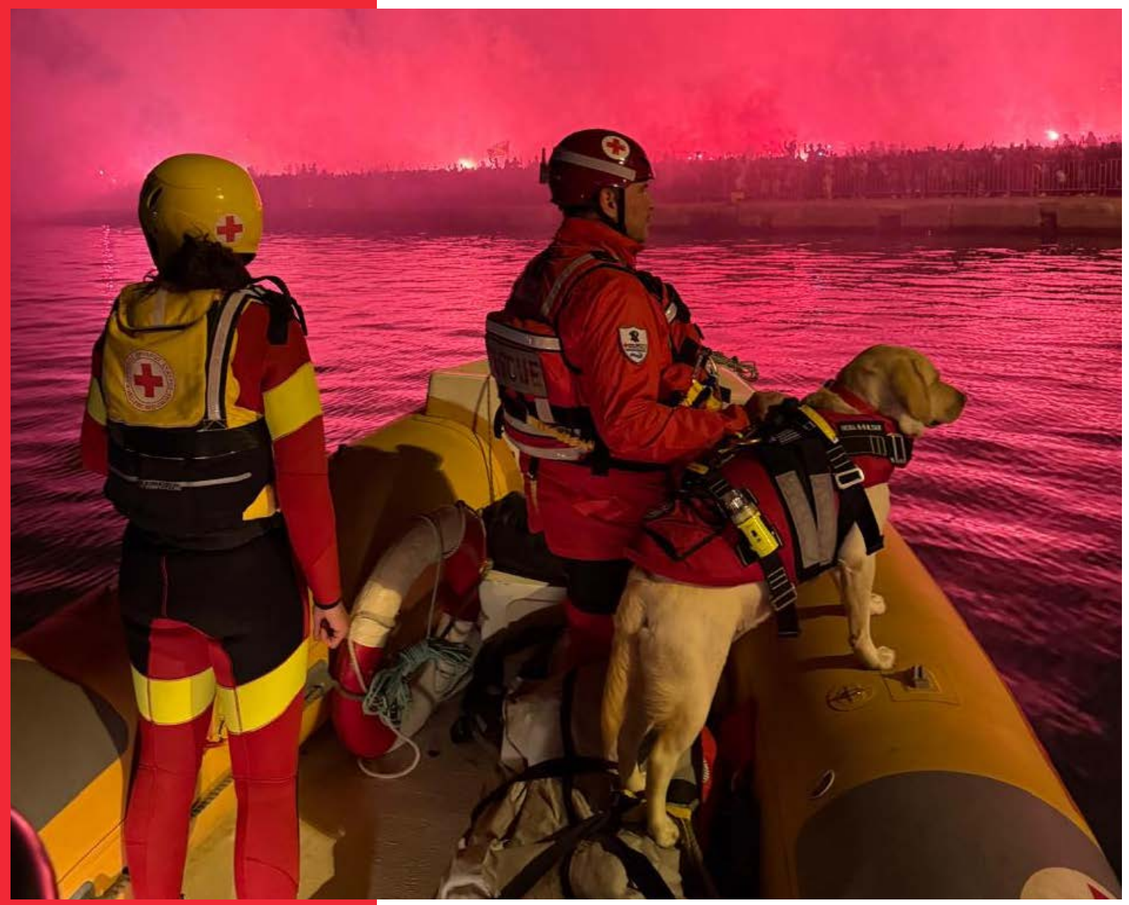
The H.R.C. organized a major awareness and information campaign on Cancer at Syntagma Square

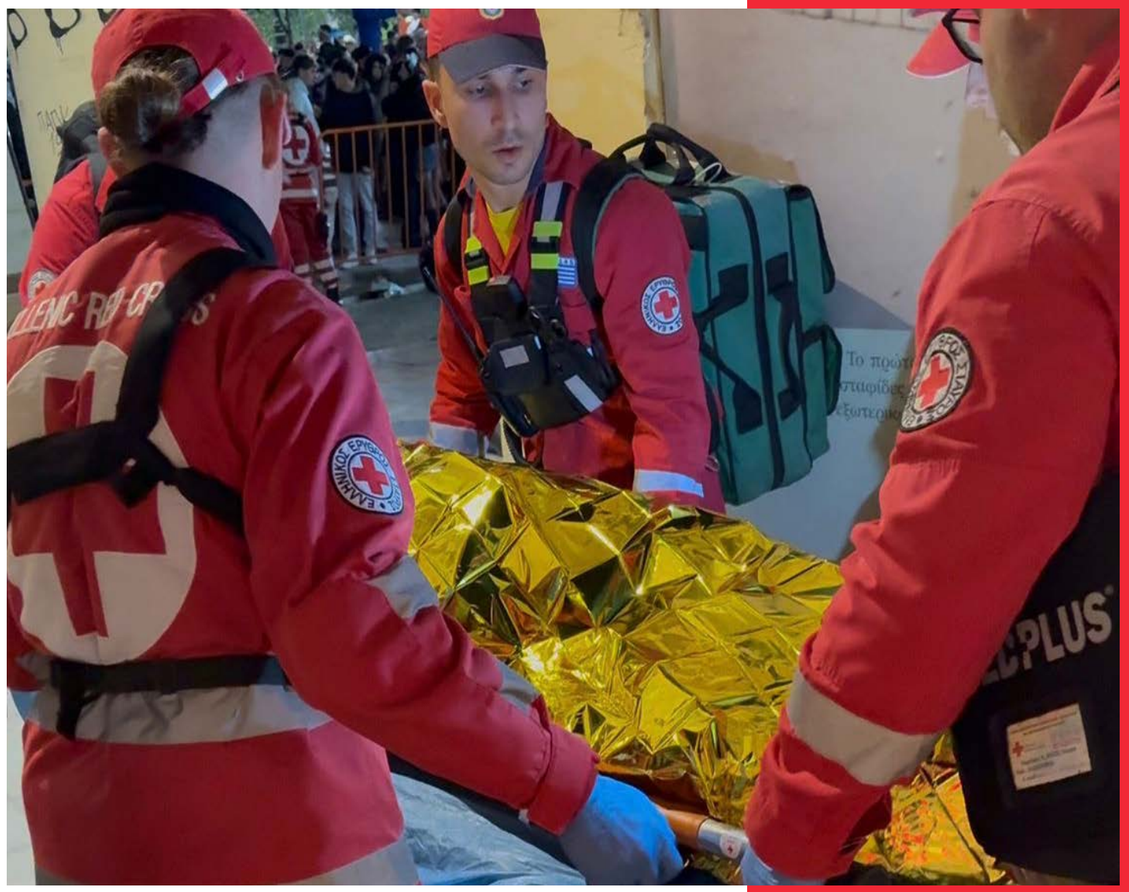
The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.) successfully carried out, on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, an awareness and information action at Syntagma Square, within the framework of World Cancer Day, in the presence of the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos. The event attracted a large number of citizens, who were informed by doctors and nurses of the Health Sector of the H.R.C. about the importance of cancer prevention and early diagnosis.

Within the framework of the event, healthcare professionals, supported by volunteers of the H.R.C. Health Sector, provided valid and scientifically documented information on issues related to:
• Early recognition of initial symptoms and prevention of common types of cancer.
• Guidance and counseling by healthcare professionals.
• Distribution of targeted informational printed material.
• Prescription of laboratory screeningtests,whereindicated.

Particular emphasis was placed on raising awareness about lung, breast, colorectal, cervical, and prostate cancer, as well as on the importance of regular preventive screening.

The aim of the action was to enhance public knowledge about cancer and highlight the importance of prevention and early diagnosis, which can significantly contribute to reducing mortality. The Hellenic Red Cross remains committed to its mission to promote public health and is dedicated to continuing prevention and awareness actions in order to strengthen the community and contribute to reducing cancer cases through early diagnosis.





The Hellenic Red Cross in Patras, with more than 180 volunteer Samaritans–Rescuers & Lifeguards, Health and Social Welfare volunteers, as well as specialized nursing staff of the H.R.C., at the First Aid Station in Georgiou Square (Esperos), with a Mobile Health Unit and 5 specially equipped tents, successfully handled hundreds of emergency incidents that occurred among the thousands of carnival participants who gathered in the city for the carnival.

Specifically, during the three-day carnival period (20–22/2), more than 512 emergency incidents were managed either on-site or at the H.R.C. First Aid Station. Intoxication, as well as other causes such as injuries, trauma, fainting, abrasions, panic situations, or pathological conditions, were the main causes of these incidents.

At the same time, mobile teams of H.R.C. volunteers, fully equipped with medical and rescue equipment, covered every emergency incident in the streets, placing particular emphasis on areas of the city where access is possible only on foot. It is noted that, during the carnival burning ceremony, there was also a presence of the lifeguard team, with the Hellenic Red Cross lifeguard rescue dog, Ira, operating at sea.

The H.R.C. successfully handled 512 emergency incidents during the three-day carnival period in Patras

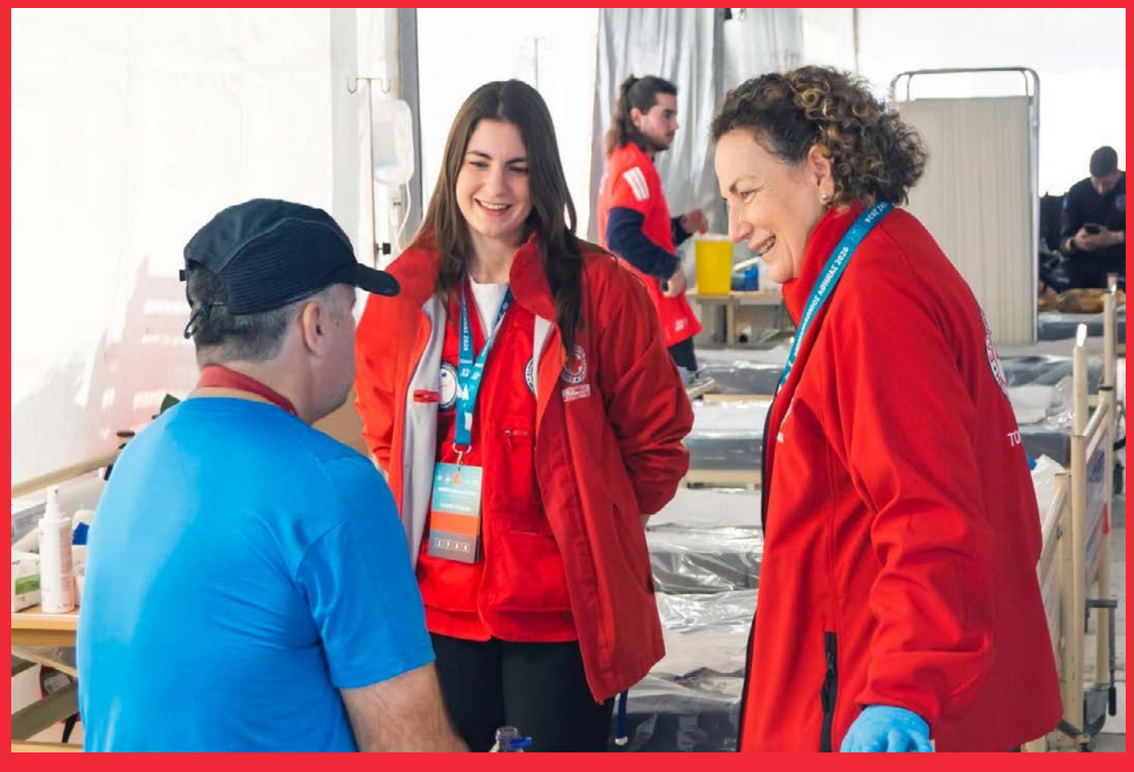
The H.R.C. successfully handled 259 incidents at the 14th Athens International Half Marathon

The presence of the Hellenic Red Cross at the 14th Athens International Half Marathon was impressive once again this year, with thousands of citizens of all ages taking part. A total of 95 Hellenic Red Cross volunteers participated in the medical coverage of this major sporting event in the center of Athens, including volunteer Samaritans–Rescuers, Health volunteers, and permanent nursing staff, who staffed 42 medical support stations and successfully handled 259 incidents that occurred during the race.

Of these, 241 incidents were treated on-site, 15 incidents were transferred to a medical station for further treatment, and 3 incidents were deemed necessary to be transported to a hospital. The most frequent cases involved musculoskeletal injuries (120 cases), minor injuries and dermatological incidents (75 cases), as well as cases of exhaustion or weakness (45 cases). In addition, metabolic problems (12 cases), cardiac incidents (2 cases), and other incidents (4 cases) were recorded.

It is noted that the Health Sector of the Hellenic Red Cross participated with a team of ten (10) professional nurses to staff the emergency pre-hospital care units, while 35 First Aid teams took part in the medical coverage operation. Ten (10) automated external defibrillators (AEDs) were used, and two volunteer teams staffed the receiving hospitals for the athletes.

At the same time, the National Coordination and Crisis Management Center of the Hellenic Red Cross, located at the H.R.C. building on 3rd September Street and staffed by experienced volunteer Samaritans–Rescuers of the Athens Branch, maintained continuous communication with the Half Marathon Operations Center at the Hellenic Police Headquarters (GADA), in order to promptly inform the volunteer Samaritan–Rescuer teams of any emergency incidents arising along the race route.



The Hellenic Red Cross collected 16,070 Units of Blood and 5,536 Bone Marrow Samples in 2025

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.) continues to lead in the promotion of voluntary blood donation in Greece, organizing blood drives on a daily basis across the country in order to support our fellow human beings who are in need.

The significant contribution of the H.R.C. to strengthening Greece's blood reserves is highlighted through the statistical data collected by the H.R.C. Blood Donation Service. Specifically, in 2025, the Hellenic Red Cross carried out a total of 672 voluntary blood donation drives nationwide, collecting 16,070 units of blood and 5,536 bone marrow samples. In Attica, 426 individuals benefited from 635 units of blood, while a total of 3,766 people supported blood donation training sessions and awareness activities aimed at alleviating human suffering and helping those in need.

It is noted that the Hellenic Red Cross has been a pioneer in voluntary blood donation since 1935. In the same year, it established the Central Blood Donation Service of the H.R.C., one of the first organized blood donation structures in Europe. At the same time, it was the first to manufacture ampoules (60 ml) of preserved blood under precise and comprehensive scientific control, which safely transported blood to frontline surgical units and military hospitals during World War II, contributing decisively to saving the lives of thousands of severely wounded individuals.

The H.R.C. organized a major voluntary blood donation drive at Arsakeio Psychiko

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), within the framework of promoting voluntary blood donation among the younger generation and in cooperation with the 2nd Arsakeio Lyceum of Psychiko, successfully carried out on Thursday, January 29, 2026, a large voluntary blood donation drive, collecting dozens of units of blood for our fellow human beings in need. The H.R.C. blood donation took place on the school premises, constituting an important initiative of solidarity and social responsibility. The response of the students was impressive, as dozens of them actively participated, practically demonstrating their spirit of solidarity and offering. At the same time, bone marrow samples were collected by H.R.C. staff.

The Head of the H.R.C. Blood Donation Service, Ms. Maria Kourkoulakou, informed the students about the process and the significant benefits of voluntary blood donation, placing particular emphasis on younger ages, the future volunteer blood donors of the H.R.C.

The H.R.C. was reinforced with two rescue dogs from the Hellenic Parliament

The K-9 Search and Rescue Team of the Hellenic Red Cross has been strengthened with two (2) new rescue dogs, following a donation from the Hellenic Parliament, enhancing the demanding work carried out daily by volunteer Samaritans–Rescuers in locating missing persons after natural disasters and other critical situations.

This was announced by the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Nikitas Kaklamanis, while welcoming to Parliament the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, accompanied by three volunteer Samaritans–Rescuers and the trained rescue dogs, which are valuable assistants in all search and missing person location operations.

Two of the three rescue dogs that visited Parliament, King and Kira, are those donated by Parliament to strengthen the H.R.C. K-9 Search and Rescue Team. The training of these dogs has already begun and includes detection of human scent, obedience, orientation, and working under pressure, so that they can be promptly deployed in this critical service. The third rescue dog, Ira, who also visited Parliament, recently participated in search operations for a missing person in Aigio.

The H.R.C. informed school students about the dangers of the internet

The Hellenic Red Cross, recognizing the need to inform the younger generation about the dangers of the internet and addictions, organizes an awareness action aimed at educating children on responsible and safe behavior. Online addictions, high-risk challenges, harassment, cyberbullying, as well as risks from alcohol and psychoactive substances, constitute serious threats to the mental and physical health of children and adolescents.

Specifically, the Social Welfare Sector of the H.R.C. is organizing an action titled: "I Learn, I Protect Myself, I Enjoy Life – Digital Safety and Addiction Prevention," addressed to primary, middle, and high school students, on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, from 09:00 to 12:30, at the historic H.R.C. building, 21, 3rd September Street, Athens.

The action includes a series of informative and educational activities, enhancing the healthy development and mental well-being of students.

The program in detail includes:

· Informative interventions for recognizing the dangers of the internet and addictions to alcohol and psychoactive substances
· Interactive workshops on skills and self-protection
· Group experiential activities promoting cooperation and solidarity
· Information about the work and actions of the H.R.C. by volunteers and staff of the Youth Sector

The action aims to inform children about the main risks of the internet and addictions, strengthening the adoption of responsible and safe behavior, while also promoting cooperation and solidarity among students, creating a safe and supportive school environment where children feel empowered and informed.

The H.R.C. informed 150 students about school bullying

The Hellenic Red Cross (H.R.C.), within the framework of its actions for education and the promotion of social awareness, successfully organized on Friday, March 6, 2026, at the historic H.R.C. building on 3rd September Street, an action for primary, middle, and high school students, on the occasion of the International Day against School Bullying, in the presence of the President of the H.R.C., Dr. Antonios Avgerinos.

A total of 150 students – Youth volunteers from all educational levels from schools in Attica participated in the action, having the opportunity to be informed and sensitized about school bullying, its forms, and ways of prevention and response. The initiative aimed to strengthen cooperation, solidarity, and the creation of a safe and supportive school environment, where students feel safe and empowered.

During the action, specialized professional psychologists and social workers of the H.R.C. Social Welfare Sector carried out informative and educational interventions, while students participated in interactive and experiential workshops of self-expression, cooperation, and creative activities.

The H.R.C. sent a strong message against school bullying during the Atromitos – AEK match

The Hellenic Red Cross and Atromitos F.C., on the occasion of the International Day against School Bullying, sent a strong message against bullying on Sunday, March 15, by displaying a banner with the message: "stop bullying – say no to bullying – Hellenic Red Cross" as the teams entered the field for the match between Atromitos and AEK. The awareness actions included the distribution of informational material by Social Welfare volunteers at all stadium gates, as well as the screening of an informational video on the stadium's big screens, aiming to raise awareness among fans about school bullying, a phenomenon which, according to recent studies, has affected six out of ten Greeks during their childhood. It is noted that the Social Welfare Sector of the H.R.C. has created an informational Guide for addressing bullying, aiming at comprehensive awareness and information for parents, children, educators, adults experiencing bullying behaviors, as well as any interested individual, including useful information, advice, and guidance.

Article by Dr. Stamatoula Tsikrika, Pulmonologist, SOT-IRIA, President of the Union of Pulmonologists of Greece, President of the Smoking Cessation Group of the European Respiratory Society, Secretary and Treasurer of the UEMS Pneumology Section

"Many of us consider breathing to be something automatic, simple, and of little particular usefulness, since it is repeated every moment of our lives. The truth is very different, as the process of breathing is by no means merely a mechanical function of the human body.

The proper functioning of the respiratory system is essential for the successful operation of all bodily functions and overall well-being, as it constitutes the 'invisible' force that provides the necessary oxygen while at the same time supporting energy, endurance, and mental clarity within the body. In this context, the age of our lungs is extremely important because, in reality, 'youthful lungs' increase defense against various pathogens, contribute to resilience to stress, and at the same time enhance emotional and mental balance, improving our overall quality of life.

According to studies, lung age does not necessarily correspond to chronological age. In other words, it is possible for two people of the same age to have completely different respiratory capacity and endurance. This result, although multifactorial, is by no means due to chance but to lifestyle choices, such as daily physical exercise, the quality of the air we breathe, and abstinence from smoking or vaping.

As the years pass, changes inevitably occur in the lungs, as they too age. There is a gradual reduction in their elasticity, the respiratory muscles begin to weaken, and the body's ability to absorb oxygen is limited at a different individualized rate. It should be understood that these changes in the respiratory system do not occur as a sudden shift, but as a slow, almost imperceptible wear, often becoming noticeable only when shortness of breath or fatigue appears during simple activities. If specific factors that 'wear out' the lungs must be identified, the modern lifestyle would certainly be one of them. A sedentary daily routine, continuous and chronic stress, as well as endless hours in front of screens have altered posture and even the way we breathe. At the same time, air pollution has the ability to 'age' the lungs faster than normal. The main causes are microscopic particles and chemical pollutants from exhaust fumes, industrial emissions, as well as heating with unsuitable or hazardous combustion methods, which penetrate and cause chronic inflammation in the airways.

This is followed by active and passive smoking, which causes continuous and progressive damage to the lungs, starting with inflammation of the airways and leading to permanent loss of lung function. The toxic substances in smoke destroy airway defenses and increase mucus production, which over time leads to narrowing and obstruction. As a result, shortness of breath, reduced endurance, increased risk of infections, as well as the development of chronic diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) occur, not to mention lung cancer.

On the other hand, strategies for protecting and renewing breathing have no time limitation. At any age, we can regain our clear breath and even redefine our respiratory system. First and foremost among individual choices is quitting smoking and vaping. Within just two weeks of quitting smoking, lung function begins to improve, while after a certain period, the rate of decline in lung capacity returns to the levels of a non-smoker.

This is followed by aerobic exercise, during which the lungs work more intensively to supply the muscles with oxygen. This gradually strengthens both the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles. Excellent choices of aerobic exercise include brisk walking, swimming, and cycling.

Proper body posture is not something we think about very often. Many of us spend hours hunched over a screen, not allowing the lungs to expand properly. On the contrary, an upright posture, with an open chest, allows for deeper and more effective breathing.

Additionally, foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries, broccoli, walnuts, and olive oil, help neutralize free radicals and consequently systemic inflammation. Adequate hydration should by no means be neglected, as it contributes to the clearance of mucus from the lungs.

Perhaps, in the end, the secret to staying 'younger' does not lie in expensive supplements or complex treatments, but in something we do thousands of times a day without thinking: how we breathe properly.

Because the freer and stronger our breathing is, the fuller our life can become."

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