HELLENIC RED CROSS



Quarterly Magazine

WHEREVER THERE IS NEED

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Message from the President of the Hellenic Red Cross

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 selfconsciousness, 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. Αντώνιος Αυγερινός

Pharmasist, Retired Major General

Edition: Communications & Public Relations Department
Editorial Office: **Konstantinos Gavriilidis**
Copy Editing: **Maria Pakiou**
Graphic Design: **Ilias Stefanidis**

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Samaritan Rescuers and Nursing Staff Supported Earthquake Victims in Venezuela

The Hellenic Red Cross (HRC), responding to the immense devastation caused by the catastrophic and deadly earthquakes that struck Venezuela, dispatched two successive teams of Samaritan Rescuers and nursing staff to the affected areas of the country. Their mission was to assist both in search and rescue operations among the rubble and in the establishment and staffing of mobile medical units to provide care for approximately 16,500 injured people and 16,000 displaced citizens. This was the only organised humanitarian mission from Greece to earthquake-stricken Venezuela, as well as the longest-distance deployment of personnel in the history of the Hellenic Red Cross. The Samaritan Rescuers who formed part of the Hellenic Red Cross's first mission experienced a unique and deeply moving moment during their flight from Panama to Venezuela, as they travelled to provide assistance to the country's earthquake victims. The pilot thanked them over the aircraft's public address system for their immense humanitarian contribution and their commitment to providing their invaluable services to the people of Venezuela, who were enduring such hardship. The passengers' warm applause at the end of the announcement was the greatest recognition of the Hellenic Red Cross volunteers' selfless dedication.

The Hellenic Red Cross teams were welcomed by a senior Venezuelan government official, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Oliver Blanco, who expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Hellenic Red Cross volunteers for their invaluable assistance, acknowledging their significant humanitarian work and tangible solidarity.
A warm welcome was also extended by the Ambassador of Greece to Venezuela, Mr. Stavros Kyrimis, who played a decisive role in facilitating the mission, as well as by representatives of Venezuela's Greek Orthodox community.





VENEZUELA

The Hellenic Red Cross Dispatched Vaccines for Children at an Orphanage in the Earthquake-Affected Areas of Venezuela via a Special Mission



Recognising the urgent needs caused by the devastating earthquake in Venezuela and the severe shortages of medical supplies, the Hellenic Red Cross dispatched vaccines through a special mission for the 100 children at the Hermanas Carmelitas de la Madre Candelaria Orphanage in the La Guaira region of Venezuela. These children had lost their parents in the devastating earthquake.

The vaccines were delivered to the orphanage by the Hellenic Red Cross nursing team in the presence of Mr. Stavros Kyrimis, Chargé d'Affaires of the Greek Embassy in Venezuela. He warmly thanked the Hellenic Red Cross for this important initiative, as well as for its overall assistance to the thousands of people affected by the disaster across the country.



The Venezuelan Red Cross Honoured Hellenic Red Cross Nurses for Their Outstanding Contribution to Disaster Relief Efforts

The seven-member nursing team of the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC), deployed to earthquake-stricken Venezuela, received honorary distinctions at a special ceremony held at the Venezuelan Red Cross headquarters in Caracas on 28 July. The awards were presented by the Vice President and the Secretary General of the Venezuelan Red Cross as a token of recognition and gratitude for the team's extensive and multifaceted contribution to the affected areas of Venezuela. The HRC nurses also received honorary medals in recognition of the Hellenic Red Cross's moving response and mobilisation during this extremely difficult period for the country.



It is worth noting that the Hellenic Red Cross's second humanitarian mission remained in the affected areas for approximately one month, providing healthcare services and pre-hospital care to thousands of injured people



The Hellenic Red Cross on the Front Line at All Wildfire Hotspots Across the Country

The Hellenic Red Cross played a vital, immediate and effective role in addressing the prolonged humanitarian crisis caused by the successive wildfires throughout the summer. These fires devastated vast areas of forestland and destroyed properties across many parts of Greece, particularly in Western Attica, where the scale of the destruction was immeasurable. Wildfires have now become one of the most serious challenges facing our country, with far-reaching and multifaceted consequences. They threaten human lives, property, the natural environment, entire local communities and ecosystems, while simultaneously creating significant humanitarian and social needs. In the face of this challenging reality, the Hellenic Red Cross carries out particularly important humanitarian and social work, guided by scientific expertise, extensive experience and technical know-how, operational excellence and readiness, and the necessary rescue and medical equipment, but above all, a deep commitment to caring for and helping others. Demonstrating an immediate and effective response, the Hellenic Red Cross's specially trained Samaritan Rescuers, nursing staff, social workers and psychologists were present at all wildfire fronts from the very outset of the fires







country (Rethymno, Boeotia, Western Attica, Thessaloniki, Nafpaktia, Keratea, Salamina, and other areas), maintaining constant communication with Civil Protection, the Fire Service and the relevant authorities. They provided every possible assistance in the challenging firefighting efforts using their specialised equipment, including water tankers and backpack fire extinguishers. They also assisted with the preventive evacuation of settlements and the temporary accommodation of evacuees in public buildings, distributing food and essential supplies.

At the same time, experienced nursing staff, supported by mobile medical units, provided First Aid to civilians and firefighters suffering from minor burns, breathing difficulties caused by smoke inhalation, eye irritation and other related conditions.

to provide medical care to serious cases until they could be safely transported to hospitals for the necessary treatment.

The Hellenic Red Cross also places particular emphasis on providing psychological care and support to those affected, who saw their homes and property destroyed in an instant. Experienced social workers and psychologists, supported by the Mobile Mental Health Unit, provided psychosocial support and Psychological First Aid to hundreds of people.

Furthermore, in several cases, including the devastating wildfires in Western Attica, the Hellenic Red Cross arranged free temporary accommodation in local hotels for dozens of people whose homes had been destroyed by the fires.

The Hellenic Red Cross Organised a Major Concert at the Panathenaic Stadium



With a strong humanitarian and symbolic message, and attended by thousands of spectators despite adverse weather conditions, the concert entitled “Keeping the Flame of Peace, Hope and Humanitarianism Burning” took place on Tuesday, 15 September 2026, at the iconic Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro).

The event was organised by the Hellenic Red Cross, in collaboration with the Hellenic Olympic Committee, under the artistic direction and curation of Paschalis Toniou. Admission was free to the public.

The grand concert was hosted by journalist Eleni Chrona, with the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) serving as the media sponsor.

In his address, the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, thanked HRC volunteers for their tremendous, multifaceted and ongoing humanitarian contribution. He also highlighted the timeless values of peace, solidarity, hope, humanitarianism and respect for fellow human beings, which lie at the very heart of the Red Cross Movement.

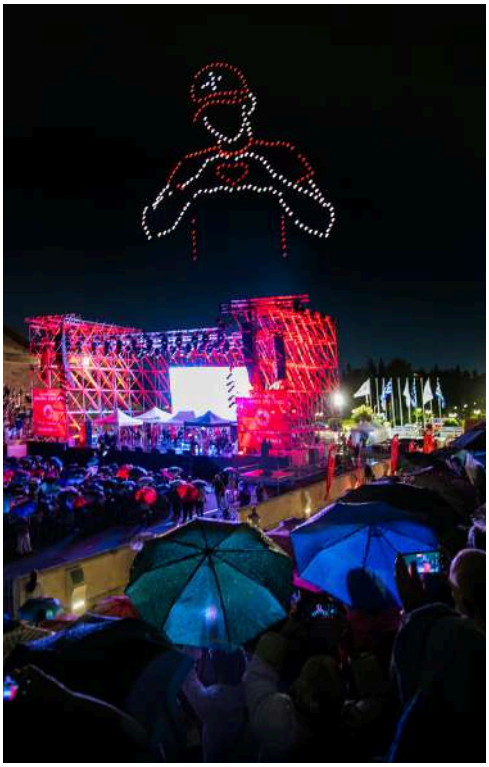
philosophy and practice, emphasising the paramount importance of promoting these values throughout Greek society.

The musical evening featured renowned composers Giorgos Hatzinasios, Paschalis Toniou, Nikos Platyrrachos, and Archimandrite Nikodimos Kavar nos. The much-loved performers who also took part included Gerasimos Andreatos, Eleni Dimou, Doros Dimosthenous, Vicky Karatzoglou, Penny Baltatzi, Mariana Papamakariou, Andriana Babali, Memos Begnis, and Sofia Papazoglou.



Vasilis Skoulas, Babis Tsertos and Giorgis Christodoulou also took part in the concert. Particularly moving was the participation of 50 choirs and 1,300 choir members, under the overall coordination and direction of the choirs by Ms. Katerina Vasilikou. Their united voices conveyed a powerful message of peace, hope, humanitarianism and solidarity from the Panathenaic Stadium.
As part of this major musical event, the Hellenic Red Cross presented.

An impressive drone show lit up the skies above Athens, highlighting the Hellenic Red Cross's extensive and multifaceted contribution to Greek society from 1877 to the present day. The spectacular display captivated the thousands of spectators who filled the Panathenaic Stadium, as well as members of the public who gathered in central Athens on Tuesday evening.



The Hellenic Red Cross Marked World First Aid Day with a Major Event in Syntagma Square



The Hellenic Red Cross marked World First Aid Day by organising a major public awareness and training event in Syntagma Square on Saturday, 12 September 2026, where hundreds of people received information and training in First Aid.
Nurses from the Health Education Service, Samaritan Rescuers and Health Sector Volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross conducted free First Aid demonstrations for infants, children and adults, as well as for our four-legged friends.

Members of the public had the opportunity to learn and practise essential techniques, including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), choking response and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).
The event also featured the Hellenic Red Cross Health Sector's ACCREF Service for Accompanied Referrals and Interpretation, under the central message "First Aid Without Language Barriers." The service helped people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds gain access to essential First Aid knowledge.

For the Second Consecutive Year, the Hellenic Red Cross Successfully Organised a Major Voluntary Blood Donation Drive on the Remote Island of Kastellorizo



Faithful to its longstanding mission of standing by everyone in need, regardless of distance or geographical barriers, the Hellenic Red Cross successfully carried out a two-day humanitarian mission to the remote island of Kastellorizo on 17 and 18 July, conveying a powerful message of life, solidarity and voluntary service from Greece's easternmost point. The Hellenic Red Cross, through its Blood Donation Service and with the invaluable contribution of Samaritan volunteers

—Rescuers and Health Sector volunteers from the Rhodes Regional Branch, the Hellenic Red Cross organised a voluntary blood donation drive at the Megisti Multipurpose Regional Medical Centre. The initiative also included the collection of bone marrow samples to register new volunteer donors, as well as public awareness and training activities in First Aid. The residents' enthusiastic response confirmed that the values of volunteerism and selfless service remain deeply rooted in Greece's remote island communities.

More than 67 people took part in the activities, representing an increase of approximately 10% compared with the Hellenic Red Cross's mission to the remote island last year. The mission concluded with particularly significant results, collecting 55 units of blood and 22 bone marrow samples, offering hope to fellow human beings searching for a compatible donor.



The Hellenic Red Cross Inaugurated Its Pavilion at the 90th Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF)

On Saturday, 5 September 2026, the official inauguration of the Hellenic Red Cross pavilion at the 90th Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) took place in the presence of a large audience. The ceremony was attended by prominent representatives of the country's political and state leadership, the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, the Secretary General of the HRC, Mr. Georgios Skoumas, and the Board of the Regional

The ceremony was also attended by the Board of the Thessaloniki Regional Branch, as well as numerous Hellenic Red Cross volunteers and members from across Greece. The exceptionally high turnout and the public's warm response once again highlighted the special place the Hellenic Red Cross holds in Greek society and the longstanding recognition of its humanitarian work and volunteer contributions. The blessing ceremony was conducted by His Eminence Metropolitan Philotheos of Thessaloniki.

who referred to the close cooperation between the Thessaloniki Regional Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross and the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki. He also expressed his wish to further strengthen the ties between the two institutions and expand their joint social welfare initiatives.
A particularly memorable moment of the ceremony was the address delivered by the Minister of Health, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis, who spoke warmly about the work of the Hellenic Red Cross and thanked the organisation for

the significant support it provides to the National Health System, particularly its contribution to hospital Emergency Departments. He also announced plans to further expand the cooperation between the two parties.
The inauguration ceremony was attended by a large number of representatives from the Government, Parliament, local authorities, the academic community, the healthcare sector and major institutional organisations.





Hellenic Red Cross Samaritan Rescuers Located and Rescued a Missing Woman in Crete



The search operation for an elderly woman with chronic medical conditions in the village of Achlades, in the Municipality of Mylopotamos, Crete, ended successfully. She was located and rescued by Samaritan Rescuers volunteering with the Rethymno Regional Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross. Specifically, following a request from the local Police Department, the Hellenic Red Cross volunteers

They immediately mobilised to search for the elderly woman throughout the wider area. After several hours of searching, one of the two Hellenic Red Cross teams operating at the scene located her in a remote, rugged mountainous area. The rescuers administered First Aid and carried her on a stretcher to the ambulance, which transported her to a local hospital for further medical care



Hellenic Red Cross Samaritan Rescuers Revived a Man Twice in Elassona



Volunteers from the Elassona Regional Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross responded immediately when a man, approximately 50 years old, lost consciousness and collapsed in Elassona's central square.

The incident occurred while a nearby public awareness event on First Aid for dogs was taking place.

The volunteers rushed to the scene and immediately took charge of the emergency, performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) successfully resuscitating the man twice.

The Hellenic Red Cross volunteer described the experience as follows:

"Today, together with my fellow volunteers, I experienced one of those moments you know you will never forget. For the first time, everything we had learned during our Hellenic Red Cross training became reality. CPR, anxiety, fear, hope... and, in the end, life. Twice. I cannot describe everything I felt. Pride, chills, joy, emotion, fear... and tears. Many tears. Because at that moment.

"At that moment, I didn't feel as though we were helping a stranger. I felt as though we were holding the life of one of our own in our hands.

And somewhere in that moment, I remembered that four years ago, we had also been by the side of someone who needed help. Back then, he had called us 'his angels.' Perhaps that is what the Hellenic Red Cross is all about: being there when someone needs you most. Becoming, even for just a few minutes, a little angel in someone's life."

The Hellenic Red Cross Distributed Thousands of Bottles of Chilled Bottled Water and Heat Protection Supplies to Visitors at the Acropolis



In response to the exceptionally high temperatures experienced in Athens during the summer months, the Hellenic Red Cross carried out an emergency support and public awareness initiative on Tuesday, 21 July 2026, to assist the thousands of visitors to the Acropolis. A separate emergency support initiative was also organised for people experiencing homelessness in Thiseio.
Specifically, teams of volunteers and staff from the Hellenic Red Cross Health and Social Welfare Sectors were stationed outside the Acropolis's main ticket offices where large numbers of visitors gather every day. During the initiative, thousands of bottles of chilled drinking water were distributed, along with sun protection items such as hats, hand-held fans and sunscreen. At the same time, Hellenic Red Cross volunteers provided information in both Greek and English on the recommended measures for preventing and managing the effects of extreme temperatures, placing particular emphasis on protecting high-risk groups, including older people, individuals with chronic illnesses, children and people who are overweight.
In addition, on the same day and at the same time, in response to the heatwave, the Hellenic Red Cross organised an emergency targeted outreach and support initiative for people experiencing homelessness in the Thiseio area, near the ISAP railway station. The initiative was carried out by the Hellenic Red Cross Social Welfare Sector.

The Hellenic Red Cross Organised a Major Water Safety Awareness Event in Palaio Faliro



The Hellenic Red Cross (HRC), in collaboration with the Municipality of Palaio Faliro, marked World Drowning Prevention Day by organising a major water safety awareness and training event. The initiative took place on Saturday, 25 July 2026, at Edem Beach in Palaio Faliro, in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, and the HRC Secretary General, Mr. Georgios Skoumas.
The event attracted more than 150

The event brought together more than 150 participants of all ages, with the primary aim of informing and raising public awareness about the prevention of drowning and water-related accidents. This is a particularly important public health issue, which continues to claim hundreds of lives in Greece every year.
Participants had the opportunity to discover first-hand the high-level capabilities of the Hellenic Red Cross Lifeguard Training School,

as well as the Hellenic Red Cross's specialised Junior Lifesaver and Lifesaver programmes, which promote training and foster a culture of safety in and around the water.
The high level of public participation confirmed the growing interest among citizens in acquiring knowledge and skills that can help prevent drowning and save lives. All participants received certificates of attendance.



The Hellenic Red Cross Trained 117 Hellenic Army Emergency Response Personnel as “General-Duty Rescuers”

The Hellenic Red Cross (HRC), within the framework of its Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry of National Defence, successfully completed the training of 117 personnel from the Hellenic Army’s Special Disaster Response Units (ETAK), qualifying them as General-Duty Rescuers.

The training was delivered by Mr. Zeki Mehmet Ali, Director of Training of the HRC Samaritan Rescuers Sector, at the 723rd Engineer Battalion in Thessaloniki (39 personnel), the 730th Engineer Battalion the 730th Engineer Battalion in Larissa (48 personnel), and the 747th Special Engineer Battalion in Loutraki (30 personnel).

The training provided to the Hellenic Army’s Special Disaster Response Units (ETAK) essentially covered the full curriculum of the Hellenic Red Cross Samaritan Rescuers School. It included both theoretical instruction and practical exercises in the fundamental principles of First Aid, including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), as well as paramedic care, rescue operations and emergency response.

disaster response (earthquakes, fires, floods, etc.). In addition, all trainees completed the required hours of practical training in hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) at medical facilities in Thessaloniki, Larissa and Corinth.

Upon successful completion of the training programme, all 117 participants were awarded the Hellenic Red Cross Certificate entitled “General-Duty Rescuer.

The Hellenic Red Cross Represented Europe at the World First Aid Championship in Dubai



The Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) achieved another major international success by participating in the finals of the First Aid World Cup 2026 in Dubai (24–25 August), where its five-member team, comprising Samaritan Rescuers volunteers, nursing staff and social workers, proudly represented Greece and Europe at this prestigious international First Aid competition.

The Hellenic Red Cross team had previously secured the the team had secured first place among the National Red Cross Societies from Europe participating in the competition. During the event in Dubai, the Hellenic Red Cross team demonstrated a high level of knowledge, outstanding professional training, preparedness and team spirit, earning praise from the organisers for its excellent performance and strong presence.

The Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Jagan Chapagain, Addressing the Hellenic Red Cross delegation, he stated: "Your team did an excellent job. I congratulate you on your participation and outstanding performance."

This major European achievement and the Hellenic Red Cross's participation in the final stage of the First Aid World Cup are a clear testament to the high standard of First Aid training and expertise demonstrated by the HRC's volunteers and staff.



The Hellenic Red Cross and Long-Distance Athlete Sotiris Barbarosos Sent a Powerful Message of Solidarity to Children with Cancer

On Saturday, 19 September, the highly demanding 24-hour challenge undertaken by long-distance athlete Sotiris Barbarosos was successfully completed in Palaia Fokaia, with the support of the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) and the Holy Metropolis of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki. The challenge set a new world record for continuous underwater walking.
The feat was dedicated to children battling cancer, conveying a powerful message of hope, strength and solidarity.

At the grand finish, the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, welcomed Sotiris Barbarosos, warmly congratulating the athlete on his remarkable achievement and the powerful message of hope, strength and solidarity he conveyed to children battling cancer.
Throughout the 24-hour challenge, day and night, the Hellenic Red Cross remained by the athlete's side without interruption, providing comprehensive medical and rescue support. Medical and nursing staff carried out regular

regular checks of his vital signs, while Hellenic Red Cross Samaritan Rescuers volunteers, a Mobile Health Unit, an ambulance, rescue vehicles and Hera, the rescue and lifeguard dog of the K9 Search and Rescue Unit, remained on full standby throughout the challenge.
Also present at the grand finish were His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, the Mayor of Saronikos, Mr. Dimitris Papachristou, and numerous supporters of this remarkable undertaking, dedicated to the thousands of children battling cancer.

The Hellenic Red Cross and the Ministry of Tourism Signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to Provide First Aid Training to Students at Tourism Schools



A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed on Tuesday, 14 July 2026, between the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) and the Ministry of Tourism, focusing on First Aid training, prevention, health promotion and strengthening the preparedness of students attending tourism schools under the Ministry of Tourism.
The Memorandum was signed by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Anna Karamanli, and the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos.

The cooperation concerns students and trainees at the Higher Schools of Tourism Education (ASTE), the Tourism Vocational Training Schools (SAEK) and the Guide Training Schools. It forms part of the Ministry of Tourism's strategy to continuously upgrade tourism education.
Under the Memorandum, educational and training initiatives will be developed to ensure that young professionals in the tourism sector acquire modern knowledge and and practical skills related to safety, prevention and the effective management of emergencies.
In particular, participants who successfully complete the training programmes will receive certification in First Aid, Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The provision of Mental Health First Aid is also included.

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross Attended the Commemorative Event Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Romanian Red Cross



The President of the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC), Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, accompanied by the Director of International Relations and Partnerships, Ms. Thaleia Fonazaki, attended the Anniversary Gala organised by the Romanian Red Cross to celebrate its 150th anniversary. The event took place on Thursday, 2 July 2026, at the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest.

The event, broadcast by Romanian Public Television, combined moments of artistic excellence with tributes to the Romanian Red Cross's long-standing humanitarian legacy. The President of the Hellenic Red Cross attended at the official invitation of the President of the Romanian Red Cross, Ms. Camelia Şucu, and the Secretary General, Mr. Adrian Halpert, representing the Hellenic Red Cross at a significant international occasion for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, reaffirming the close ties of cooperation and solidarity that unite the two National Societies.

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross's participation forms part of the organisation's ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation with European National Societies, with the aim of exchanging expertise and jointly promoting humanitarian values.

The Hellenic Red Cross Successfully Presented the Theatrical Performance “The Island of Slaves” on the Main Stage of the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus



As part of its social, humanitarian and cultural activities, the Hellenic Red Cross presented the theatrical performance “The Island of Slaves” by Pierre de Marivaux, performed by the Hellenic Red Cross Social Welfare Volunteers’ Mobile Theatre Group.
The performance took place on Friday, 19 June 2026, on the Main Stage of the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus, as part of the “Let’s Go to the Municipal Theatre! Let’s Go to Piraeus!” initiative.

The event was attended by the Secretary General of the Hellenic Red Cross, Mr. Georgios Skoumas, who delivered a speech on behalf of the President of the HRC, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos. In his address, he congratulated the volunteers on their participation and dedication to bringing the performance to life and warmly thanked them for their longstanding and unwavering contribution to society.
The event was also attended by the Ms. Nana Agapitou, President of the Piraeus Regional Branch of the Hellenic Red Cross.
The performance, which explores issues of equality, dignity, respect and human coexistence, was adapted and directed by Rafaela Martinez. It constituted an artistic initiative with a strong social and humanitarian dimension, promoting the values of solidarity, respect and independence.

Strong Presence at the 13th SY.FA.K. Conference in Heraklion, Crete



Once again, the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) made a strong presence at the 13th Conference of the Pharmacists' Cooperative of the Aegean and Crete (SY.FA.K.), participating in the two-day Health and Prevention Activities held on 11–12 September, alongside parallel events at Eleftherias Square in Heraklion, Crete.
The President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, emphasised that the HRC, through its ongoing health promotion initiatives throughout Greece, as well as through its Health Services (Home Nursing Care, Mobile Health Unit, Health Education, HRC Health Education Stations, etc.), delivered by its nursing staff and Health volunteers, the HRC has consistently served as a key pillar of public health in Greece.
He also made special mention of the tour carried out across Crete in September by the Hellenic Red Cross Mobile Psychosocial Support Team, with the aim of raising public awareness of Mental Health First Aid, including Mental Health First Aid for Children.
The Mobile Health Unit of the HRC Health Sector, staffed by doctors and nurses, together with the Mobile Psychosocial Support Team of the HRC Social Welfare Sector, staffed by social workers and psychologists, carried out free public awareness, prevention, health promotion and mental health promotion activities.

The President of the Hellenic Red Cross Honoured by the Holy Metropolis of Nea Ionia, Philadelphia, Heraklion and Chalkidona



During the Solemn Hierarchical Vespers held on the occasion of the feast commemorating the Beheading of Saint John the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, at the historic Church of Saint John of Madytos in Nea Filadelfeia (28 September), His Eminence Metropolitan Gabriel honoured the President of the Hellenic Red Cross, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, in recognition of his longstanding and invaluable contribution to his fellow human beings and his practical commitment to the principles and values of humanitarianism and social solidarity, by awarding him the highest distinction of the Holy Metropolis: the Medal of its Patron Saint, Saint George of Neapolis, the Hieromartyr.
In his address to the honoured President, His Eminence praised the significant social and humanitarian work carried out by the Hellenic Red Cross under his leadership, while also highlighting the excellent cooperation between the organisation and the Holy Metropolis in initiatives aimed at providing social assistance and supporting our most vulnerable fellow human beings.



Multifunctional Refugee Centre: The Hellenic Red Cross's "Festival of Cultures" — A Bridge of Humanity, Remembrance and Hope

The "Festival of Cultures," the flagship event of the Hellenic Red Cross Athens Multifunctional Refugee Centre, was held with great success as part of Refugee Week 2026, under the central theme of "Courage."

The Athens Multifunctional Refugee Centre was transformed into a vibrant space for gathering, cultural exchange and human connection. People of different ages, nationalities, languages and backgrounds came together for a celebration dedicated to inclusion, solidarity, creativity and and the power of human expression. The event was honoured by the presence of the Secretary General of the Hellenic Red Cross, Mr. Georgios Skoumas, representing the President of the HRC, Dr. Antonios Avgerinos, and the Director of the HRC Social Welfare Sector, Ms. Areti Kentistou.

The evening's programme, which highlighted culture as a universal language, focused on the people supported on a daily basis by the Athens Multifunctional Refugee Centre. Through their participation, creativity and their presence brought authenticity, vibrancy and strength to the celebration. Their voices, stories and creations became part of a shared narrative of resilience, hope and the universal human need to feel a sense of belonging.

A particularly moving moment was the musical performance by the Centre's beneficiaries, who sang beloved songs from Greek cinema. This moment brought the audience together in a simple yet deeply touching way, reminding everyone that music

can build connections where words are not enough. Equally meaningful was the participation of the Ukrainian Association, which presented traditional Ukrainian dances and songs, bringing to the forefront the themes of memory, resilience and the refugee experience through the power of cultural expression. Its participation was closely connected with the collective artworks “The Thread of Resilience” and “What Gives Me Courage and Strength,” which formed a moving artistic presentation created exclusively for Refugee Week. The works explored the journey, displacement, loss, hope and the strength to carry on.

Through colours, materials, images and personal messages, participants expressed what gives them the courage to move forward. The red thread served as a symbol of connection between countries of origin, personal journeys and the places where people found the courage to carry on once again. In this way, the refugee experience was presented not merely as a memory of hardship, but also as a story of resilience, dignity and profound human strength.
Through its Athens Multifunctional Refugee Centre, the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) continues to build bridges of communication, trust and inclusion with unwavering commitment and humanitarian responsibility, promoting the values of solidarity, dignity and humanity every day.







Article by Dr. Stamatoula Tsikrika: “The Role of Vaccination in Preventing Respiratory Diseases”



Article by Dr. Stamatoula Tsikrika, Chair of the European Respiratory Society’s Health Promotion and Smoking Cessation Group, Secretary of the UEMS Pneumology Section, and President of the Hellenic Association of Pulmonologists

In the 21st century, as medical science continues to advance at a rapid pace, the value of vaccination as a public health tool remains invaluable. Respiratory infections, whether viral or bacterial, continue to be among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. The wise saying of Hippocrates, ‘Prevention is better than cure,’ applies directly to vaccination, which are among the most effective tools available to healthcare professionals for preventing infectious diseases. New environmental challenges, such as climate change, directly affect the epidemiology of respiratory viruses, as changes in temperature, humidity and the quality of the air we breathe create favourable conditions for the spread of pathogens. The increase in extreme weather events and the deterioration of air quality contribute to the frequency and severity of respiratory infections, particularly among vulnerable populations. Globally, strengthening vaccination programmes, combined with targeted policies to address the climate crisis, constitutes an urgent strategic priority for preventing and reducing respiratory infections in the community.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that respiratory infections alone account for more than four million deaths annually, although the actual figures may be underestimated due to epidemiological limitations. Vaccines play a crucial role in the prevention of respiratory diseases, protecting vulnerable populations by reducing morbidity and mortality while also alleviating the burden on healthcare systems. Seasonal influenza, pneumococcal disease, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are among the most significant causes of hospitalisation and death worldwide. Furthermore, vaccination against these respiratory pathogens contributes indirectly but substantially to tackling antimicrobial resistance.

Many people are unaware that viral infections, such as influenza and RSV, although they cannot be treated with antibiotics, can frequently lead to secondary bacterial infections, such as pneumonia and otitis media. These complications often result in the extensive and frequently inappropriate use of antibiotics.

Furthermore, preventing bacterial infections through vaccination, such as pneumococcal vaccination, further reinforces these efforts by helping preserve the effectiveness of available antibiotics and preventing the spread of existing resistant strains, thereby serving as a shield against antimicrobial resistance.

Although anyone can become infected with a virus or other pathogen, certain population groups are more susceptible to infection and its complications. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, infants, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and people who are immunocompromised or living with chronic conditions, should follow the recommendations issued by the National Immunization Committee.

It is important to understand that vaccination is most effective at the population level when a high degree of immunity is achieved across the general population, a phenomenon known as “herd immunity.” This refers to a form of indirect protection against infectious diseases that occurs when a large proportion of a population becomes immune to an infection, either through previous infection or vaccination, thereby providing a degree of protection to individuals who are not immune.

Despite the indisputable scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness and safety of vaccines, vaccination coverage continues to face significant challenges, particularly in the field of respiratory diseases. One of the main obstacles is the spread of the anti-vaccination movement, which, although representing a minority, exerts a disproportionate influence through social media and online misinformation.

The “internet doctor,” rather than serving as a reliable source of accurate information, often promotes unsubstantiated opinions, spreading conspiracy theories and fake news that fuel vaccine hesitancy. On the other hand, the lack of targeted information from the relevant authorities, the failure to provide comprehensive and accurate information about potential side effects, and the absence of a personalised approach by healthcare professionals further exacerbate this phenomenon.

Addressing these challenges requires coordinated action, including strengthening independent scientific research, promoting interactive scientific communication, combating misinformation and the spread of false health-related news, building public trust and, above all, ensuring free and and equitable access to vaccines for all. Only through a comprehensive, holistic strategy can we ensure the success of vaccination programmes and the protection of public health.

In conclusion, vaccination protects not only individuals but also society as a whole by reducing the spread of viruses and protecting those who cannot be vaccinated due to medical contraindications. It is an act of individual responsibility and collective solidarity.

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