The call to ACT DIFFERENTLY! encourages us to seek better and more innovative ways in which we carry out our work. It inspires us to pursue our common goal, of building more healthy and resilient communities.

FLORENCE CALL FOR ACTION

In a continuously changing humanitarian landscape, the Florence Call for Action (FCfA) seems more relevant than ever. The document signed in 2014 by all National Societies across the Europe Region calls for increased commitment to forge STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS with stakeholders within and outside our Movement, and for maintaining an INNOVATIVE and FLEXIBLE approach throughout our work. MIGRATION is one of the three main topics alongside VOLUNTEERING and SOCIAL ASPECTS highlighted in the Florence document.

BACKGROUND

For migrants, many countries in the Europe Region hold the promise of a better future. In recent years, however, people coming to Europe have been seriously affected by the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions in their countries of destination. As more people are fleeing conflicts, persecution, political instability and extreme poverty, National Societies in their auxiliary role are faced with the challenge of tailoring their programmes to the newly emerged vulnerabilities in the regional context of economic decline.

In 2015, almost a million people embarked in an unprecedented procession through Europe seeking safer and more dignified lives in countries further north. The migrants arrived mainly via Turkey, a country already hosting an estimated two million¹ people displaced by the prolonged war in Syria. The impact of the conflict in Ukraine caused some two million people to flee their homes to other parts of the country and also to Russia, which is a main hub for labour migrants from Central Asia as well.

For the long term, strengthening the resilience of migrants as well as the communities that host them is key to the successful integration of people who need our support to rebuild their lives.

¹ As of November, 2015/UNHCR
Resilient and relevant National Societies need to:

CONTINUE to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants.

POSITION your National Society as a key partner who is able to assess and address risks and vulnerabilities at every stage of the migration process.

DEVELOP protection activities ensuring that authorities and other actors respect their obligations towards protecting the lives, the rights and dignity of individuals.

ENCOURAGE the integration of migrants into local communities by facilitating access to language courses, housing, the labour market, education and training.

PROVIDE vocational training or educational support for children and youth.

PROMOTE and sign the petition of the Protect Humanity – Stop Indifference campaign, which fosters solidarity and empathy for vulnerable migrants, and calls for their protection as a matter of collective responsibility.

COUNTER intolerance, prejudice and discrimination and promote respect for diversity.

ADVOCATE for the right of migrants to seek safety and asylum. Remind governments of their legal obligations they agreed to under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Main European migration routes

Pathways represent general migration trends based on available data as of October 2015. Map produced by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Good Practices

Road-side RFL service

- For migrants on the move who need to establish contact with their families, the Slovenian Red Cross provides Wi-Fi connection and access to cell phones in the accommodation camp of Sentilj.

Changing young minds

- The ‘Positive images’ educational toolkit developed by the British Red Cross in partnership with 14 other National Societies, became a popular resource for youth educators committed to promoting positive attitudes towards migrants. It consists of ten innovative and educational ideas that allow children to think seriously about the issues surrounding migration. Some of the themes address issues related to what prompts people to flee their homes, the journeys migrants take, and not least the positive contributions they make to their host communities.

A call for help

- Rano, from Tajikistan, who was subjected to forced labor in Kazakhstan by her relatives, was set free from her captivity with support from one of the Red Crescent centres in Astana. Rano established contact with the centre after she learnt about the rights of migrant workers and the assistance available to people like her from a leaflet dropped off by a Red Crescent volunteer at the shop she was forced to work in. With support from the Red Crescent lawyer and the Tajik Embassy in Astana, Rano escaped her captor and returned safely to her home country. The centre that took the woman’s call belongs to a cluster of 23 similar establishments spread across four countries in Central Asia, set up by the Central Asian Red Crescent Labour Migration Network. The Russian Red Cross Society and IFRC are also active members of this network, which is providing legal rights training to potential labour migrants, while advocating with authorities for access to services by labour migrants. In addition, the network is leading campaigns against xenophobia and discrimination.