



Red Cross EU  
**Strategy**  
**2022-2027**



**RED CROSS**  
**EU OFFICE**



“Over the next five years,  
we will continue to build  
on our efforts to safeguard  
and respond to the needs  
of vulnerable people  
and communities in  
partnership with the EU.”

# Introduction

**This strategy builds on the Red Cross EU Office strategy 2013-2020. It describes the strategic direction, goals and priorities of the work that we – the Red Cross EU Office and its members: 27 National Red Cross Societies in the EU, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Icelandic Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – commit to undertaking in relation to our engagement with the EU institutions from 2022 to 2027.**

With new challenges and vulnerabilities, we need to review our approach to reflect the current EU environment and future priorities. This strategy is aligned with [the IFRC Strategy 2030](#),<sup>1</sup> which represents the collective ambitions of a unique global network of 192 National Societies, 51,000 branches, 650,000 staff and 14 million volunteers active at the local and international levels, reaching 160 million people each year.

This strategy sets out how we aim to strengthen our positioning towards the EU institutions and EU Member States as a relevant, key strategic partner for internal and external EU action. We have a wealth of experience and expertise and employ an evidence-based approach with the support of various thematic reference centres,<sup>2</sup> hubs, and National Society platforms and working groups. We also work closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to ensure strong positioning of the Red Pillar towards the EU institutions.

In this context, the Red Cross EU Office and its members play complementary roles in EU affairs. National Societies, as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, can play a crucial role in shaping EU policies at the national level by sharing consistent messaging across the Union. The Red Cross EU Office helps to ensure an EU-wide perspective, drawing on members' activities and regularly liaising with the EU institutions, as well as with other networks and coalitions of civil society organisations active in Brussels. Together with the IFRC, based on its recognition as an international organisation, we bring a global and regional outlook and long-term experience in coordinating and supporting humanitarian action around the world. Membership engagement – towards members, but also from them and among them – is key to enabling our work together at EU level.

Our EU-related activities will build on the decisions, pledges and resolutions made at the statutory meetings<sup>3</sup> of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Namely, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – a unique non-political forum bringing together the IFRC, ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with states party to the Geneva Conventions to shape the humanitarian agenda and make joint commitments.

# Background and context



THE NATIONAL  
SOCIETIES  
IN THE EU

**+276,000**  
staff

**+920,000**  
volunteers

With global challenges such as COVID-19, climate change, growing poverty and inequality, and increasing population movements, the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is more important than ever. The IFRC Strategy 2030<sup>4</sup> recognises that new approaches are needed to drive global change and commits to using our global network's reach and resources effectively by listening, thinking and acting differently, as well as by being open to learning and adapting along the way.

In our engagement with the EU, we will contribute to driving positive change in the EU and externally, to ensure that all people matter and that, collectively, we are ready and willing to make the changes needed so we can all have opportunities to thrive.

Following the European elections in May 2019, the EU set out the following five strategic priorities that shape its political agenda until 2024:

1. **A European Green Deal** – addressing the issue of climate change and paving the way for the EU to become the first carbon-neutral continent.
2. **An economy that works for people** – reinforcing the EU economy, while securing jobs and deepening the economic and monetary union.
3. **A Europe fit for the digital age** – investing in digital transformation, research and innovation and reforming data protection.
4. **Promoting the European way of life** – upholding fundamental rights and the rule of law, as well as enhancing a system for legal and safe migration, while managing the EU's external borders.
5. **A stronger Europe in the world** – championing multilateralism and a rules-based global order, enhancing relations with neighbouring countries and partners.

Based on the work of members and their priorities at EU level, we will engage with the EU and Member States on these issues to better support people and communities before, during and after crises.

Climate and weather-related risks are rising, putting increasing numbers of people in danger in Europe and all over the world. The European Commission has shown strong global leadership by launching the EU Green Deal in December 2019 and adopting the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change in February 2021. This sets out how the EU can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. It strives to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change.

In 2019, before COVID-19, 92.4 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which represents 21.1 per cent of the total population. It can only be expected that the pandemic will adversely affect these figures and create long-term social consequences. In March 2021, the EU launched its Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with targets to address inequality and access to services for the most vulnerable people in the EU. At the global level, the European Commission has committed to investing 10 per cent of the Global Europe instrument in human development, as a response to the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 in third countries.

“ We are one of the largest humanitarian actors in the world and among the biggest non-profit social service provider networks in Europe, and are able to work all the way along migration routes. ”

In September 2020, the European Commission launched the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, defining the future direction of EU asylum and migration policies. Building on the Commission's work since the 2015 European Agenda on Migration and subsequent proposals, it intends to fill existing gaps to establish the Common European Asylum System. The pact demonstrates that managing and reducing irregular migration will remain guiding priorities for the EU in the years to come. However, a more ambitious approach that promotes inclusive societies and upholds migrants' rights needs to be pursued.

The EU aims to build a stronger and more united voice in the world with a Team Europe approach, strengthening coordination on all external actions and encouraging the EU and Member States to work more together. In March 2021, the Commission issued a communication on humanitarian aid that sets out its priorities in the humanitarian field. The EU is also planning to reinforce the role of its civil protection capacity.

We are one of the largest humanitarian actors in the world and among the biggest non-profit social service provider networks in Europe, and are able to work all the way along migration routes from country of origin to country of destination. In this capacity, we will engage with the EU in its priority areas to strengthen the position of members in fulfilling our humanitarian mandate of serving the most vulnerable people.



Supporting the national vaccination campaign against COVID-19 of the Health Ministry of Peru for indigenous communities, the Peruvian Red Cross, the IFRC and the ICRC implemented a project to facilitate community dialogue and logistical support to vaccinate hard-to-reach communities, October 2021. © Sebastián Castañeda/ICRC/REUTERS



## Our mission

To mobilise support at EU level for Red Cross work with vulnerable people inside and outside the EU.



# Our mission, vision and principles

The Red Cross EU Office works with and for its members to represent their interests and expertise vis-à-vis EU decision-makers and stakeholders. It promotes the protection, dignity and well-being of vulnerable people by facilitating and voicing common positions and recommendations towards the EU and Member States. It has a coordination role in relation to EU issues: scrutinising European developments that could impact the implementation of members' work to access and assist the most vulnerable people. The Red Cross EU Office also enhances the exchange of knowledge and good practices, as well as highlighting EU funding opportunities and helping members to develop joint proposals.

## Our vision

The Red Cross continues to be a unique, trusted and credible partner to the EU institutions in terms of policy dialogue and programming. It speaks with a common voice and acts in the interest of vulnerable people across the EU and around the world.

Through a wide range of services, National Red Cross Societies in the EU, Norway and Iceland support people in need through their networks of community-based volunteers, in collaboration with their national authorities as auxiliaries to the government in the humanitarian field. This auxiliary role is a specific and distinctive partnership based on international and national laws which define the areas in which the National Society supplements or substitutes public services, among other activities.

Where requested, the IFRC coordinates and directs international assistance following disasters caused by natural hazards and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations. Its mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people, working with National Societies in responding to catastrophes around the world. Its relief operations are combined with development work, including disaster preparedness programmes, health and care activities, and the promotion of humanitarian values. As a global leader on the localisation agenda, the IFRC supports the capacity development of local actors. It also works with National Societies along migration routes to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection based on people's needs.

Together, we are exceptionally placed to actively contribute to dialogue on EU policies and practices. We have direct practical insight into the consequences of EU policy choices and extensive technical experience in implementing EU



Volunteers from the Netherlands Red Cross' Ready2Help network support the local food distribution center in the Dutch city Emmen. The Ready2Help network consists of people who want to lend a hand in times of emergency, April 2020. © Harry Rock/Netherlands Red Cross

programmes, as well as solid working relationships with government counterparts in EU Member States. In recent years, the Red Cross EU Office and its members have participated in a growing number of EU policy discussions and processes across a wide variety of areas. Members have also taken on larger and more complex EU-funded projects, both domestically and internationally. Over the next five years, we will continue to build on these efforts to safeguard and respond to the needs of vulnerable people and communities in partnership with the EU.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is committed to and bound by its seven fundamental principles. Adopted in 1965, they sum up our values and enable us to provide effective, unbiased assistance to people in need.

## **Humanity**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

## **Impartiality**

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious belief, class or political opinion. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## **Neutrality**

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## **Independence**

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## **Voluntary service**

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## **Unity**

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## **Universality**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



A person with short dark hair, wearing a bright red jacket, is seen from behind, looking out over a vast blue ocean under a clear sky. A blue drawstring bag is slung over their shoulder. The person is leaning on a red railing, likely part of a rescue boat.

“We will strengthen the visibility and recognition of the impact of our work and continue to coordinate to maximise the reach and scope of our global network.”

Survivor on board the Ocean Viking rescue boat post-rescue, December 2021.  
In September 2021, IFRC post-rescue teams joined maritime and humanitarian NGO SOS Mediterranee's crew on board the Ocean Viking rescue ship in the Central Mediterranean Sea. © Brynja Dögg Friðriksdóttir



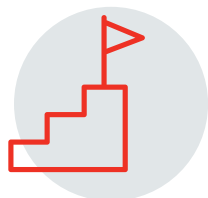


## Our goals

**To achieve our mission and work towards our vision over the next five years, the activities of the Red Cross EU Office and its members will be defined according to three interlinked and mutually reinforcing goals:**

1. To heighten Red Cross influence on EU policy, legislation and practice by stepping up advocacy and communication efforts in Brussels and in EU Member States. Employing an evidence-based approach, we will strengthen the voice and positioning of the Red Cross on EU issues by elaborating joint messaging and strategies to effectively engage decision-makers at national and EU levels, and beyond when relevant.
2. To increase EU resources for our domestic and international work through enhanced collaboration, communication and knowledge exchange on EU programmes. We will strengthen the visibility and recognition of the impact of our work and continue to coordinate to maximise the reach and scope of our global network.
3. To serve Red Cross EU Office members on EU-related issues by monitoring the legal and political framework in which they operate. The Red Cross EU Office will analyse and advise members about EU trends and opportunities, facilitate information-sharing and provide capacity building and tailored technical support.

# Our objectives



## Heighten **Red Cross** influence

- » We will promote the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and values towards the EU institutions and work effectively as a Movement to boost resilience, social cohesion and a principled approach to assistance.
- » We will influence the EU to adopt a people-centred approach to coherently and consistently address the needs of people at risk inside and outside the EU through prevention, preparedness, response and longer-term development actions.
- » We will profile the Red Cross and Red Crescent's unique role as the world's largest humanitarian network, made up of National Societies working at the local and national level who are auxiliaries to their public authorities and able to provide comprehensive approaches to addressing multiple risks and changing vulnerabilities.
- » We will employ an evidence-based approach to inform EU policies through the good practices and expertise of members and the wider Red Cross and Red Crescent network through quiet and public humanitarian diplomacy to ensure support to the people who need it the most.



## Increase **EU** resources

- » We will seek to make sure that EU funding applies a principled approach and reflects members' advocacy priorities, with the aim of reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, while leaving no one behind.
- » Building on established relationships of trust with the EU on humanitarian action, we will strive to extend the scope of this partnership to include climate, development cooperation, social inclusion, migration and other priority funding areas for members.
- » We will work towards capitalising on existing coordination mechanisms between members and our collective strength to enhance the co-creation of programmes and our access to larger EU funding envelopes.
- » We will call on the EU and Member States to implement an EU budget that reflects the increasing needs of vulnerable communities and guarantees quality, predictably and transparency of funding.
- » We will leverage members' diversity, knowledge and expertise to bridge the gaps within our network in accessing EU funding.





## Serve members

- » We will pursue improved network efficiency and effectiveness by boosting cross-border and subregional cooperation, peer-to-peer exchange, innovative approaches and capacity building on EU-related issues at national, regional and global levels.
- » We will amplify members' activities, positions and approaches by capturing knowledge, developing joint analysis and co-creating common materials to be communicated and promoted at EU and national levels.
- » The Red Cross EU Office will endeavour to enhance members' knowledge, capacities and engagement by communicating about opportunities to engage with EU processes, policies, programmes and mechanisms.
- » The Red Cross EU Office will reduce its environmental footprint by developing and implementing a sustainability policy.



In August 2021, Greece was engulfed in flames for days and thousands of people were evacuated from around Athens. Hellenic Red Cross teams are worked day and night, distributing basic necessities for rescue teams and the people affected. © Hellenic Red Cross

This strategy will be complemented by a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that will be developed in 2022. The Red Cross EU Office will also elaborate annual work plans that will translate the strategy into yearly objectives. The M&E framework and annual work plans will be integral to operationalising the Red Cross EU Strategy 2022-2027. A mid-term review of the strategy is foreseen to check progress and make any necessary adjustments to reflect the changing context.

# Our strategic aims

Our focus over the coming five years will be to highlight the humanitarian consequences of EU policies on the needs of vulnerable people and communities according to the five global challenges identified in the IFRC Strategy 2030. Based on Red Cross EU Office members' experience, we will promote EU policy measures, programmes and practices to address growing needs inside and outside the EU.



Syrian Red Crescent volunteers provide psychosocial support as well as other relief for the most vulnerable people affected by the crisis, August 2021. © Syrian Arab Red Crescent



## GLOBAL CHALLENGE 1

# climate and environmental crisis

Climate change is a humanitarian emergency, threatening human survival now and in the future. The frequency, intensity, unpredictability and severity of extreme weather events have increased and will continue to do so, inside and outside the EU. Meanwhile, the longer-term impacts of climate change, such as rising temperatures and sea levels, desertification, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation, are augmenting people's exposure and vulnerability around the world.<sup>5</sup> As time goes on, the effects will surely get far worse.<sup>6</sup>

The climate crisis and environmental degradation are significant risks to humanity.<sup>7</sup> However, the funding available for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction does not seem to consistently prioritise the countries at the highest risk and with the lowest capacities to adjust and cope with these hazards. In the EU, climate action is at the heart of the European Green Deal<sup>8</sup> – consisting of ambitious measures ranging from cutting greenhouse gas emissions, to investing in research and innovation, and preserving Europe's natural environment. Among these goals, the EU aims to become the first climate neutral continent by 2050 through a legislative package, including the European Climate Law.

At international level, the EU plays a key role in climate negotiations and is cooperating with its partners to address climate change as a high bilateral and multilateral priority. The EU Adaptation Strategy includes dedicated measures in international action to foster climate resilience and preparedness. For the Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, the European Commission has set a spending target to dedicate at least 30 per cent of the budget to activities related to the climate and environmental crises. Furthermore, in its humanitarian assistance, the Commission recognises that anticipatory approaches can help bolster the resilience of communities, including forcibly displaced

groups, in regions vulnerable to climate-related and other hazards. Efforts are underway to mainstream climate change impacts and environmental factors into humanitarian aid policy and practice, including by strengthening coordination with development, security and climate and environment actors.

Our commitments on the climate and environmental crisis vis-à-vis the EU:

- » We will advocate for the humanitarian impacts of climate change to be addressed more effectively, to bridge the gaps between humanitarian, development and climate change agendas and finances.
- » Given the major role that impact-based forecasts and early warning play in preventing potential disasters and protecting the most exposed communities by taking early action, we will call for the inclusion of disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, climate change adaptation and resilience building in all relevant policies and activities inside and outside the EU. We will also push for increased EU investment in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and forecast-based financing.
- » We will work to position National Societies at national and European levels to strengthen their collaboration with EU Member States in their auxiliary capacity, considering the opportunities offered by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and EU ambitions to scale up climate action and disaster resilience.
- » In line with the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, the Red Cross EU Office will undertake measures to reduce its ecological footprint.

## evolving crises and disasters

Disasters are predicted to become more common, more costly, more complex and more concentrated. Climate change and environmental degradation are among the root causes of global health deterioration, conflict, food and water insecurity and displacement. These factors are also interconnected with poverty, lack of access to basic services and the increasingly protracted nature of crises. Over the years, global humanitarian needs have constantly increased, with more than 235 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021.<sup>9</sup> Yet the resources available to meet these needs fail to grow at the same pace, making the funding gap more pronounced than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated humanitarian crises and revealed gaps in health and social systems. It has demonstrated the importance of local action and the need to better prepare for epidemics and health emergencies, as well as systemic and transboundary risks.

The pandemic has led to new ambitions to strengthen cooperation between the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Member States to improve the coordination and effectiveness of prevention, preparedness and response to disasters.

In its Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles, the European Commission sets the direction for how the EU and its humanitarian partners can strengthen their response to growing humanitarian needs worldwide. Endorsed by the Council, the validity and relevance of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid is reconfirmed – with a strong focus on putting respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law consistently at the heart of the EU's external action. When it comes to development cooperation, Global Europe aims to contribute to ending poverty and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. However, there is a need to ensure that the instrument supports the work of local civil society actors and 'leaves no one behind' – by engaging at EU level and working directly with the EU delegations in third countries. In recent years, the EU has been developing its nexus approach through its external action. Starting by establishing the humanitarian-development nexus,

it is now focusing on linking humanitarian, development and peace building.

Our commitments on evolving crises and disasters vis-à-vis the EU:

- » Promoting a principled and needs-based approach in EU humanitarian aid will remain at the centre of our advocacy efforts. With increasing barriers to humanitarian assistance, including EU restrictive measures, a growing administrative burden, and the risk of instrumentalisation of aid, we will promote our fundamental principles and showcase the Red Pillar's added value before, during and after disasters.
- » We will work to consolidate coordination and improve the coherence of our joint action towards the EU in Brussels and in third countries to position ourselves as a partner of choice in development cooperation.
- » We will leverage the Red Cross and Red Crescent's global network and expertise in humanitarian-development-peace nexus interventions and strengthen members' approach, visibility and engagement with the EU on the nexus.
- » We will promote National Societies as strong and effective local actors, further contributing to the localisation of aid.





## growing gaps in health and well-being

Governments around the world are grappling with an increased prevalence of population movements, epidemics, climate change, conflicts and disasters, to name but a few. Resisting crises requires strong health and social systems which are accessible and act as safety nets for affected people, preventing their hardship and social exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated health and social inequalities, underlining the lack of access to health care, social support and material assistance for the most vulnerable people in society. Undoubtedly, its impacts will be felt for years to come.

In many places, including across Europe, consecutive crises have negatively contributed to increased social division, vulnerability and precarity, placing extra strain on health and social service systems, which are often underfunded and understaffed. Additional factors like rising poverty, ageing populations and growing levels of poor mental and physical health are also making it harder for these systems to respond and adequately support people at heightened risk. As a result, the potential to access free, high-quality health and social services at community level in Europe is extremely challenging for vulnerable groups. Over time, this negatively affects their well-being, physical and mental health and life prospects, while creating additional barriers to realising their human and social rights.

Increasingly, national governments are looking towards the EU for support in addressing the health and social crises which are pushing their systems to breaking point. Traditional approaches are no longer effective and there is a need to identify new social economy solutions which are innovative and sustainable models of service development, delivery and financing, and that strengthen health and social systems and meet the needs of the most vulnerable people. The European Pillar of Social Rights, its Action Plan and associated funding programmes, such as the European Social Fund Plus, seek to guarantee the social rights of all European citizens and create upward social cohesion and inclusion to end poverty, inequality and social exclusion. As front-line health and social service providers, National Red Cross Societies are perfectly placed to support the EU and Member States to meet these objectives through delivering initiatives and good practices which can be replicated across different regional, national and local contexts.

Our commitments on growing gaps in health and well-being vis-à-vis the EU:

- » We will engage at European and national levels to stress the need to invest in frontline auxiliary services assisting the most vulnerable people in the EU, including by supporting not-for-profit organisations to ensure service innovation and sustainability, as well as positive impacts for affected people.
- » We will strive to position National Societies as strong regional, national and local front-line service providers whose work promotes the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights to increase take-up of EU funding and mitigate the risks of poverty and social exclusion, ensuring access to health and social services for the most vulnerable people.
- » We will promote National Societies' development of innovative and sustainable programmes which help to close social gaps and guarantee inclusive health and social service coverage. We will also enhance the sharing and exchange of good practices implemented in national and local contexts among members.

“Increasingly, national governments are looking towards the EU for support in addressing the health and social crises which are pushing their systems to breaking point.”

Italian Red Cross volunteer nurses test the blood pressure of a person experiencing homelessness in Rome, October 2019.  
© Emiliano Albensi/Italian Red Cross



## GLOBAL CHALLENGE 4

# migration and identity

At global level, the number of people living outside their country of origin has increased significantly over the past 20 years.<sup>10</sup> People migrate for different reasons, ranging from violence, persecution, conflict, poverty, and political and social issues to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Regardless, people on the move are often forced to take increasingly dangerous routes across land and sea. During their journeys, they face significant risks and challenges, such as abuse and exploitation. Their ability to access essential services and humanitarian assistance at all stages of their journey is critical to protecting their lives, dignity, human rights and well-being. In this context, National Societies play a key role in identifying and responding to individual vulnerabilities, as well as in providing essential services to all migrants – such as food, water, hygiene and sanitation, housing, education and healthcare. Understanding the diverse needs of people who migrate and providing tailor-made support along migratory routes, including through enhanced cross-border collaboration between Movement partners,<sup>11</sup> is an important priority.

Across Europe, too many migrants are unable to make use of social and legal systems. In recent years, EU actions aimed at countering irregular migration have often undermined migrants' rights and humanitarian needs. The criminalisation of migration and of the assistance provided to migrants, coupled with limited safe and legal migration pathways to the EU and the tightening of border controls, are limiting migrants' access to assistance and protection. At the same time, benefitting from basic preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services, as well as other essential services such as housing and education, has become very difficult for migrants, especially for people without a legal status who risk arrest or deportation.

While the New Pact on Migration and Asylum acknowledges the positive contribution of migration to European societies, it reaffirms that managing migration and reducing irregular migration will remain priorities. The pact takes a “whole-of-route approach” and recognises that the internal and external aspects of migration are inextricably linked. Yet, much focus is placed on externalising migration and increasing returns at the expense of setting



up safe legal migration pathways and ensuring a well-functioning, rights-based asylum system across the EU. Furthermore, its interpretation by Member States could lead to the lowering of protection standards, while increased use of detention and the setting up of holding facilities at borders will likely further challenge the ability of humanitarian actors to access all migrants in need. Against this background, the new Asylum and Migration Fund and the European Social Fund Plus are key to supporting fair and efficient asylum systems, as well as to responding to the integration needs of migrants and refugees.

Our commitments on migration and identity vis-à-vis the EU:

- » We will support migrants' access to protection, including by promoting and contributing to the development of frameworks that would allow effective access to international protection and family reunification in the EU.
- » We will leverage the broad network within the Movement and enhance transnational cooperation to facilitate migrants' access to assistance along migratory routes, including when in transit. We will pay special attention to ensuring access to healthcare for all migrants, incorporating both rehabilitation and mental health assistance.
- » We will promote inclusive European societies and influence EU policy-making on migration, asylum and borders to contribute to the social inclusion of migrants.
- » The Red Cross EU Office will support principled access to EU funds for members' activities with and for migrants.



“We will promote civic engagement and volunteerism.”

Lithuanian Red Cross staff and volunteers work hard to provide humane, timely and adequate immediate and longer term support services to people in need, without discrimination. © Lithuanian Red Cross

## GLOBAL CHALLENGE 5

### values, power and inclusion

Globally, values which underpin humanitarian action are under threat, despite a growing need for greater engagement and solidarity between all stakeholders. Wider political, economic and social divergence and differences are some of the reasons behind government inaction in responding to humanitarian crises. These global changes risk creating a world that is more disconnected and unequal, as well as less inclusive and empathic. Across Europe, there is rising xenophobia and eroding social cohesion.

In Europe and beyond its borders, successive crises have further exacerbated social division, vulnerability and precarity for millions of people. This has resulted in more people being exposed to poverty and violence – greatly impacting individuals, their families, communities and society. At the same time, factors like reduced financial support, increased conditionality of funding and a lack of effective and adequate consultation mechanisms are narrowing the scope for inclusive dialogue in the development of policy and programming at both EU and Member State levels. The shrinking humanitarian space puts humanitarian work under serious threat. It increases precarity among vulnerable populations as they struggle to survive disasters or conflicts, while being denied the right to receive vital assistance. The dissemination of our fundamental principles and the work of our volunteers and youth sections play an important role in strengthening social cohesion countering xenophobic discourse and leaving no one behind.

More than ever, the EU needs to work in partnership with organisations which uphold the key principles of humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality in all their actions with and for vulnerable groups.

Our commitments on values, power and inclusion vis-à-vis the EU:

- » We will step up engagement to promote and disseminate the values which underpin our humanitarian work with and for vulnerable people in Europe and around the world.
- » We will advocate for EU policies and funding programmes to adhere to humanitarian principles and values at all levels, while also preserving the humanitarian space.
- » We will showcase the practices, initiatives and work of members which translate our fundamental principles into tangible actions which benefit the most vulnerable people.
- » We will promote civic engagement and volunteerism at national and EU levels to heighten understanding, awareness and action for vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion. We will particularly focus on children and families experiencing poverty, older people, young people who are not in education, employment or training, migrants, LGBTIQ+ persons, survivors of gender-based violence, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

People are verified at a food distribution site in Mola village as part of a food distribution programme in Zimbabwe supported by the Finnish Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), March 2020. © Ville Palonen/Finnish Red Cross



# Resourcing the strategy

**The work of National Red Cross Societies in the EU, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Icelandic Red Cross and the IFRC towards the EU institutions and bodies is coordinated by the Red Cross EU Office – a diplomatic mission that is entirely resourced by the financial and human resources contributed by members.**

To ensure that these precious resources are used in the most efficient and effective way, the Red Cross EU Office will make sure that joint EU priorities are guided and owned by members through the different office governance mechanisms.

Thematic steering groups will continue to meet and exchange on a regular basis to shape our work in specific EU policy areas and adapt to developments as they occur. The Coordination Group<sup>12</sup> will meet at least four times a year to offer general strategic guidance and follow the implementation of work plans and provide financial oversight. The annual meeting gathers the senior leaders of Red Cross EU Office member organisations to coordinate annual and longer-term priorities and decide on the office budget, elect members of the Coordination Group and discuss other governance issues.

We will strive to enhance synergies with other parts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent network, such as the IFRC regional offices,<sup>13</sup> especially the office for Europe and Central Asia, to build on their operational expertise. We will also closely collaborate with the relevant internal working groups and platforms, IFRC reference centres and other knowledge hubs. In addition, we will ensure regular information exchange and cooperation with colleagues from the ICRC.

We will look to diversity funding sources by exploring possible project-based funding to meet the ambitious expectations of members, while maintaining sustainable levels of resourcing through membership contributions that enable operative independence to define common priorities and activities.

In the coming years we will:

- » Ensure core national staffing that cover the key priorities of our members.
- » Develop and implement a more equitable and sustainable staff-on-loan model.
- » Explore possible project-based placements in line with our three strategic goals.
- » Seek increased effectiveness by further strengthening the complementarity of our distributed network with National Societies, the IFRC Secretariat and regional offices, as well as thematic platforms and reference centres and the ICRC delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium.







**RED CROSS**  
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The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is committed to, and bound by its seven fundamental principles  
**HUMANITY | IMPARTIALITY | NEUTRALITY | INDEPENDENCE | VOLUNTARY SERVICE | UNITY | UNIVERSALITY**