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Information bulletin no. 1 Croatia, Montenegro and Italy: Forest fires

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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**Date of disaster:
starting from 16 July 2017**

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Host National Societies: Croatian Red Cross, Red Cross of Montenegro, Italian Red Cross

Other partner organizations involved in the operation: local authorities including civil protection, armed forces, firefighters

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation.

The situation

Forest fires started on Sunday, **16 July 2017** in the Adriatic coast of Croatia and Montenegro, as well as earlier last week in Italy on the slopes of the Vesuvius volcano.

In **Croatia**, the fires have been affecting villages around the city of Split (Sitno Gornje, Sitno Donje, Tugari, Srinjine, Žrnovica, Jesenice, Podstrana, Strožanac and suburbs of Split, Kila, Karepovac and Mejaši). Some parts of the city were without water or electricity and national authorities were working around the clock to re-establish the water and electricity. By the evening of Monday, the Croatian Red Cross prepared places for some 250 people inside a Split Arena sports hall in case there were evacuations and also established a rest point for firefighters in Podstrana.



Croatian Red Cross staff and volunteers involved in water distribution during the firefighting. *Photo: Croatian RC Facebook page*

In **Montenegro**, at least 100 tourists have been forced to evacuate from a coastal area that has been the hardest hit by the blaze. Fuelled by strong winds and dry weather, the fire on the Lustica peninsula in southern Montenegro has spread near to homes and camping zones. National authorities in the country have asked for international help as well as the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) to fight wildfires that are also raging along the Adriatic Sea coastline. Ukraine bilaterally offered a firefighting aircraft, to Montenegro, and in the framework of the EUCPM, Bulgaria has kindly offered a Mi-17 helicopter, which was accepted by Montenegro. The helicopter departed from Bulgaria early in the morning of 19 July.

By 19 July 2017, the situation has been considerably normalized thanks to support from water-bombing planes. The local authorities are working on restoring water and electricity supplies in the affected areas.

In **Italy**, fires started on 12 July on the slopes of the Vesuvius volcano. The national fire service was involved in 441 operations across the country, including 288 wildfires, of which those at Vesuvius were among the most serious. Clouds of smoke rose two kilometres into the air, visible from Pompeii, Naples, and Sorrento. Several tourists had to be evacuated from the affected area.

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This year, an increasing number of wildfires has been seen across the Mediterranean regions of Europe due to climate change and increasing weather risk conditions among other factors. In addition to Croatia and Montenegro, Europe faced severe fires in Portugal, Spain or Italy over the past weeks.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In Croatia, the **Croatian Red Cross**'s assessment shows limited damage to households (exposed settlements were affected with few houses damaged and two destroyed by fires). Thanks to the involvement of water-bombing planes, the situation is under control in most of the areas. The Croatian Red Cross is part of Crisis Management body on all levels (municipal to national). The National Society's intervention team members (50 persons in shifts) were deployed to support firefighters and population in danger. In Arena Split, the National Society established an accommodation center, where 11 people have been accommodated. Mobile teams were involved in food and water distribution. The Croatian Red Cross also established psychosocial support (PSS) point in the most affected municipality of Zrnovica.

In Montenegro, the National Society is closely coordinating with authorities in case any assistance is needed. The **Red Cross of Montenegro** has been supporting firefighting response with distribution of drinking water and sandwiches.

In Italy, all the **Italian Red Cross** teams in the emergency area have been mobilized to assist the affected population. The COC (Municipal Operating Center) was activated in the municipalities of S.Anastasia and Pollena Trocchia. In the latter, as problems with the water system were identified, a large number of water bottles have been deposited at the CRI headquarters. Several volunteers were involved in the distribution of water, mineral salts, biscuits and milk to all operators involved in the fire service. Along with Herculaneum, due to the proximity of the flames, the Don Orione institute has been evacuated, hosting over 40 children with disabilities. For their transport, a mini mobile column was set up with two ambulances, four minibuses and four cars. Across the emergency area, about 60 Italian Red Cross volunteers were involved in the response operations.

The situation, however, remains risky in the affected areas, therefore the IFRC Regional Office for Europe is in continuous contact with the affected National Societies to monitor the developments.



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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



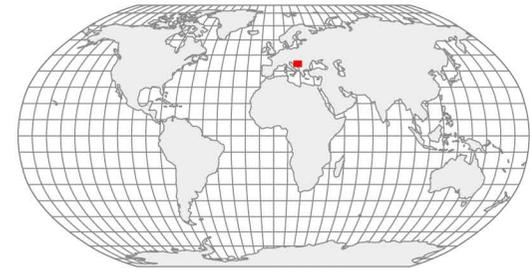
Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.



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