



UNICEF Country Office for Croatia Earthquake Situation Report #3

January 13th 2021



Key highlights

- Eight people died, including a 13-year-old girl from Petrinja; 36 persons have been injured, and 30 persons saved from rubbles.
- The Government declared a state of disaster for Sisak-Moslavina County and parts of Zagreb and Karlovac Counties.
- UNICEF deployed an emergency team to the affected areas to assess the immediate critical needs of children and it delivered the first batch of 13,5 tons of emergency supplies.
- Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic sent a letter to UNICEF Representative Regina Castillo welcoming UNICEF's support.
- The Government activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and received international assistance from several EU Member States.
- The Government of Croatia formed a Government Coordination Committee to coordinate all organizations and numerous initiatives set up to respond to the earthquake. The Committee is led by the Deputy Prime Minister who is also the Minister of Croatian Veterans, Mr. Tomo Medved.
- The Government of Croatia launched a web platform potresinfo.gov.hr for information and updates related to the Earthquake response and recovery.
- The Government also opened a state treasury account for helping those affected by the earthquakes and appealed to citizens to be cautious given the resurgence of fake donation accounts.
- The UNICEF Country Office in Croatia and the Slovenia National Committee for UNICEF launched emergency fundraising appeals to raise much-needed funds for both the immediate and the longer-term emergency response.

Situation overview & Humanitarian needs

Following the earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale that hit the area of Petrinja town in Sisak-Moslavina County on December 28, 2020, which seriously damaged homes and properties, an even stronger earthquake of magnitude 6.3 hit the same area on December 29, 2020, causing numerous casualties and widespread damage.

According to the European Mediterranean Seismological Center, the quake epicenter occurred 46 kilometers (28 miles) southeast of the capital Zagreb. The earthquake was felt in Bosnia and Hercegovina, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Austria. The maximum felt intensity was estimated at VIII (Heavily damaging) to IX (Destructive) on the

Situation in numbers

8 (including 1 child)
of human casualties

36
of people injured

70,000
of people directly affected

13,750
of children directly affected

After the initial assessment made on 31 December in cooperation with national partners, UNICEF would need **\$1,230,000** for immediate assistance in the first 6 months of 2021.

European macroseismic scale, and it is the worst earthquake in Croatia in the last 140 years.

Since the initial strong earthquakes, the Petrinja area has been hit by more than 700 aftershocks, magnitudes ranging from 1.2 to 4.8 on the Richter scale, increasing fear and anxiety of citizens and contributing to further damage of houses and buildings. The aftershocks are also affecting the neighbouring counties, including the City of Zagreb, where buildings damaged in the March 2020 earthquake are at further risk of collapsing, while still being populated.

Also, Zaprešić, a town west of the capital of Zagreb, suffered from the strong earthquake on December 29, 2020, with several residential building collapsing, and some being detected later on with life-threatening structural damages, leaving more families without a home (over 100 families had to be evacuated so far), serious damage to primary and music school and other public buildings, but with no injured people or fatalities. The town of Karlovac also experienced significant material damages where 755 buildings have been severely affected.

The Croatian military, civil protection forces, firefighters, and Croatian Mountain Rescue Service were urgently deployed to the affected Sisak-Moslavina county and assisted in a search and rescue operation. More than 30 people were saved from the rubble, 8 persons lost their life (including a 13-year-old girl) while 36 injured persons were hospitalized.

Damage to buildings and houses

There has been widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure, disruption of electricity and water. The most affected town is Petrinja (population of 21.000) where, according to the official statements, half of the town is destroyed, followed by Glina (population of 9.000), its surrounding villages, and the city of Sisak (population of 40.000). Authorities received more than 30,000 reports of damaged buildings to date. 50,000 people are affected by direct damage to houses or buildings, almost 9,000 houses and buildings are severely damaged, including the region's largest hospital and a variety of other public institutions like primary care centres, schools, social welfare institutions, centres for rehabilitation of children with disabilities, schools, kindergartens, etc. The initial assessment confirmed that there are at least 1,500 families near Sisak, Petrinja and Glina who have lost their homes as a result of the earthquake. This number is likely to increase as engineers continue their assessments. More than 5,000 pupils and students are affected by damages to school buildings (55 buildings inspected, 9 are permanently and 12 temporarily not for use). More than 60% of pupils are currently dislocated from their homes. The most likely variant for the affected schools is online teaching, but in smaller towns and villages the problem is electricity, access to the internet and necessary equipment that was likely destroyed. **Earthquakes also damaged embankments of rivers Kupa and Sava, raising risks of floods in the following period. Hundreds of people have been forced to leave their homes.** HRK 99 million worth of damage has been reported for 755 buildings in Karlovac and the Mayor stated that the conditions for declaring a natural disaster had been met.

Healthcare facilities in Petrinja and Glina are unsalvageable. To meet the urgent need to restore primary care access, two temporary structures (containers) are put in place to facilitate continued delivery of healthcare services.

Accommodation of citizens and families

Thousands of people have been internally displaced, many in hotels across country or within relatives. The Government of Croatia (GoC) invited persons to register their temporary location. According to the latest available data from Croatian Red Cross, some 700 persons are accommodated in 7 temporary collective shelters (army base, schools, temporary container's settlement, hotels, etc.), while others found shelter in other parts of the country. In villages, many families decided to stay near their ruined homes since the agriculture and livestock are the only sources of income for many. Those who stayed are sleeping in cars and tents, while more firm shelters such as trailers, shipping-style accommodation containers and mobile homes and houses used for tourism are arriving in the affected area. It is estimated that 500 hundred container homes for accommodation of families have been secured so far, the demand is estimated at 1,000 to 1,500 such homes, organized container settlements are being planned in Sisak, Petrinja and Glina areas. 338 earthquake victims had to be relocated from the army barracks in Petrinja due to possible static disruption of the barracks building caused by frequent earthquakes. Insufficient preventive measures against COVID-19 were observed during the immediate emergency assessment, increasing the risk of spreading the virus among the affected population and frontline workers. There is a concern that the current turmoil may lead to a surge of COVID-19 cases, with thousands of displaced and hundreds sheltered in government-organized accommodation or with families in crowded conditions.

The mental health of the affected population

The earthquake and constant aftershocks in the last two weeks caused strong emotional and physiological reactions for both, children and adults directly affected as well as a large population of people living in the surrounding areas. There is an overwhelming feeling of exhaustion and acute stress reactions due to which most children and adults report insomnia, anxiety, and fear. UNICEF team witnessed these consequences by talking to various professionals, parents, and children. The reason is the unpredictability of the earthquake and the fact that no one cannot prepare for it. Since the earthquake happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a cumulation of traumatic experiences that significantly weaken the human ability to adapt and thus endanger the mental health of children and adults.

Critical needs of children

Primary and secondary schools in Sisak, Petrinja, and Glina are seriously damaged, five of them are entirely unusable, nine of them need serious reconstruction, and thirteen will be able to function. Also, many preschool buildings in all three towns are completely ruined or have serious damages. Most children have lost their schoolbooks, laptops and other equipment.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) presented the plan for the **continuation of the school year** with COVID-19 prevention measures, i.e., children in primary school (grades 1 to 4) and children in the last year of secondary school will be attending face-to-face lessons starting on 18 January. All other grades will be online for now. As for the schools that were damaged in the earthquake-affected areas, MoE is still considering whether the second half of the school year will start on January 18, as in the rest of the country. Unions, parents, headteachers, and the local government are all advising against it and requesting an extension for the start of the second semester in the damaged schools, at least until January 25. Students and teachers from damaged schools will be temporarily relocated to schools that can continue to function.

Over 1,000 primary and secondary students have temporarily left their places of residence and it is an open question if they will return for the beginning of the new school semester due to unsalvageable damage to their houses, lack of safe temporary shelters, as well as widespread fear of additional earthquakes.

Both adults (as teachers and parents) and children are going through a crisis, many have survived traumatic experiences, with the dangers from earthquakes still not behind them. The emotional response from both, children and adults, is very strong and overwhelming. The fear of new earthquakes and buildings collapsing on them is constantly present. It is expected that these consequences on the mental health of children, their parents and teachers will stay present for many months after this difficult period is over.

There is little attention to **children with disabilities** who are, together with their families, also affected by the earthquake. There are 2.400 children, age 0 – 18 who have some disability in Sisak-Moslavina County, out of which there are 608 children enrolled in schools and only 8 in preschools.

Healthcare facilities throughout the affected region have been damaged by the earthquake. Critical needs in the health sector include the procurement of PPE, medical equipment, and supplies. Temporary structures (ship-in containers) have been installed to facilitate the continued delivery of healthcare services. There seven paediatric primary health teams in Sisak, Petrinja and Glina, with 8.766 children age 0-18 (out of which 4.772 children age 0-7). Among the youngest group of children, there are about 10% of children with risk for developmental delays that should be timely screened by paediatricians and referred to get diagnosed to either health or/and social welfare diagnostic teams, which is not possible in current conditions. There is only one health provider (hospital in Sisak) of some types of early interventions for children with developmental delays or disabilities in the county, as well as only one NGO provider as a part of the social welfare network. Both providers have serious damages to their buildings and equipment and are currently not able to work.

The Ministry of Health has shared a list of critical needs including medical equipment and supplies for the damaged paediatric primary health care units, as well as the central hospital in Sisak. Until emergency funding is secured, the Country Office contacted corporate partners to assess their willingness to support the delivery of needed equipment and continuation of health care for children and women in the affected areas.

Humanitarian strategy and response

The GoC declared a disaster in the Sisak-Moslavina County and parts of Zagreb County and Karlovac County. The overall emergency response and coordination are with the local authorities, which coordinate civil protection, relief organizations, etc. The Government of Croatia formed the Government Coordination Body, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, to coordinate the national response. The GoC launched a website <https://potresinfo.gov.hr> as starting reference starting point for the affected population and humanitarian actors.

The GoC released 19 million USD from the state budget for immediate intervention and assistance to the affected areas. The European Commission also pledged to support the GoC and the first relief arrived through the EU mechanism of civil protection. Significant support is provided by the Croatian Red Cross and numerous volunteers. In delivering humanitarian aid to the affected population, authorities mostly rely on the Red Cross and direct all donations either to the Red Cross or civil protection.

Besides, the Ministry responsible for families and social policy deployed an additional social workforce to affected areas and allocated funding to provide one-off cash benefits to the affected population (396 USD for single households and 555 USD for families). In just a few days, more than 10,000 requests have been submitted.

UNICEF response

UNICEF's work in Croatia is guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. On December 31, 2020, UNICEF deployed an emergency team to the affected areas to assess the situation of children and the most urgent needs in affected areas. Based on the initial assessment, the first batch of 13,5 tons of emergency supplies have been delivered to the country – 2.400 tarpaulins have been handed over to the Directorate for Civil Protection of the Ministry of the Interior on January 2, 2021. Tarpaulins (plastic sheet covers) are being used for the protection of damaged homes and institutions of service providers from the rain and snow.

Based on the consultations with partners and the findings from the rapid assessment, UNICEF Croatia will focus on addressing critical child protection, health, and education needs, and has identified key response sites and children's core protection needs.

Child Protection

In close partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, social service providers in affected areas, and implementing partners, UNICEF will focus on addressing the urgent, life-sustaining needs of children and their families, with a special focus on the most vulnerable. This includes the deployment of mobile teams to affected areas in Petrinja, Glina, Sisak, and surrounding villages to provide mental health and psychosocial support to foster care families and other families at heightened risk that have been beneficiaries of the social welfare system (e.g., due to parental support services, GBV, poverty, etc.). Mobile teams will closely work with centres for social welfare (Glina, Petrinja and Sisak) and Sisak Family Center Branch in Sisak-Moslavina County to ensure outreach to isolated villages, early identification and timely referral to other protection services and interventions. Mobile teams will also collect key information and data on the needs of children to inform further programmatic interventions. Since the earthquake affected the social workforce as well, psychological first aid will be also provided to critical child protection professionals, including children and staff of social service providers in the affected area. These outreach teams will act as additional support to deployed mobile teams from the line ministry that oversee the administrative workload linked with processing approvals for cash benefits. For this purpose, UNICEF is preparing a partnership agreement with a Society for Psychological Assistance.

The earthquake severely damaged the centres for social welfare in Glina, leaving the social workforce without the necessary work equipment. To ensure the continuation of their work and immediate functionality, UNICEF donated 10 notebook computers, with installed official governmental software and necessary social welfare applications and databases, to the centres for social welfare in Glina and Petrinja.

Through UNICEF-supported parenting programmes and a phone-helpline for foster parents' peer support, additional psychosocial support is provided to children, caregivers and professionals working in kindergartens.

Finally, to ensure that children accommodated in collective shelters have access to child-friendly spaces, UNICEF will collaborate with the Red Cross to strengthen their capacities for organizing child-friendly services bearing in mind the COVID-19 preventive measures. For this purpose, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Croatian Red Cross

is prepared, and a valuable donation has been agreed with a corporative donor for equipping up to seven child-friendly spaces.

Education

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF will provide support to enable the continuation of education and full inclusion of children with disabilities and Roma children in the school system again, as well as the best solutions for providing psychosocial support to all students and teachers.

ECD/Health

UNICEF is gathering information from various sources (health and social welfare system, service providers, and local partners) to support the re-establishment of early childhood intervention services for children with developmental delays and disabilities. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the most needed support for improvement of the health services for children will be provided in the coming days.

Media and communications

Communication activities in support of resource mobilization, advocacy and programme response priorities includes [human-interest stories](#) from the field, [UNICEF response web page](#) and [fundraising appeal web page](#), press releases and social media posts with regular updates on UNICEF [supplies delivery](#) and programme response with CTAs for donations, advice on mental health, [youth blogs](#) and [advice for families with children](#). First [Newsletter](#) for private and public sector partners was disseminated on 11 January.

[Social media - Human-interest story - family using UNICEF tarpaulins for temporary shelter](#)

[Social media - Human-interest story - family placed in school](#)

[Social media - Human-interest story - family placed in sports hall](#)

[Social media - Human-interest story - family placed in army compound \(1\)](#)

[Social media - Human-interest story - family placed in army compound \(2\)](#)

Funding

UNICEF Croatia Country Office would need US\$ 1,230,000 to provide relief and support for first 6 months and address the critical needs of children and adolescents affected by the earthquake in Croatia. Critical needs are linked to children's and young people's protection, health, and education. This also implies supplying personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers, hygiene kits for families, basic IT equipment for service providers to keep the affected children and their families safe during the two ongoing crises – the earthquakes and the Covid-19 pandemic.

UNICEF Croatia allocated USD 50,000 from locally raised funds and has launched an appeal to mobilise additional resources to provide immediate and longer-term support. Thanks to UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) and UNICEF's donors that provide flexible funding for emergencies, an additional USD 100,000 has been received from the Global Humanitarian Thematic (GHT) fund.

Even with the many fundraising initiatives both from the government, NGOs and the international community, UNICEF Croatia resource mobilization efforts are continuous. The initial Country Office fundraising activities through direct marketing channels have generated nearly 500.000 HRK (USD 81,367) up until now and another 100.000 HRK (USD 16,273) from a larger corporate entity (financial institution). Additional contributions-in-kind (CiK) in the form of hygiene/paper supplies from a large manufacturer have been donated and distribution will be occurring by the end of this week. The value of the donated products is USD 85,555.

There are additional CiK negotiations in place for the setting up of Child Friendly Spaces; an additional 150 companies have been contacted for in-kind support, with an additional 350 companies contacted for financial support.

UNICEF Croatia private sector fundraising efforts are being complemented thanks to the efforts of the UNICEF National Committee in Slovenia which has provided USD 96,000. Additional flexible funding would enable UNICEF to

contribute meaningfully to the government-coordinated response efforts in ensuring that the rights of children are upheld, and their needs addressed in a timely and effective manner.

Programme areas	Funding needs	Funding identified	Funding gap
Child Protection	\$230,000	\$77,640	\$152,360
Health and nutrition	\$150,000	15,000	\$135,000
Education	\$200,000	40,000	\$160,000
WASH	\$100,000		\$100,000
RCCE	\$50,000	10,000	\$40,000
Emergency supplies	\$500,000	\$55,000	\$445,000
Grand total	\$1,230,000	\$197,640	\$1,032,360

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The next Situation Report will be issued on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.