

**THE NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY  
OF ROMANIA**



**REPORT  
TO THE XXVth  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, DECEMBER 1995**

# THE ROMANIAN RED CROSS, 120 YEARS OF EXISTENCE

Founded on the 4th of July 1876 as a consequence of Romania's adhering to the Geneva Convention, the Romanian Red Cross is one of the oldest National Societies.

It is recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the 23rd of August 1876.

Its utility and neutrality is proven in its very first year of existence by sending an ambulance to assist the injured in the war between Serbia and Turkey.

In 1877 and 1878, during the war between Turkey, Romania and Russia, the Romanian Red Cross organizes for the first time courses for voluntary Red Cross nurses, secures ambulances and sets up the first hospital.

Between 1916 and 1919, the Romanian Red Cross invests great efforts in developing its structures. Besides securing ambulances, it sets up warehouses, Red Cross hospitals, canteens for refugees and a tracing service, given the fact that a great part of the Romanian territory is under foreign military occupation.

On the 3rd of July 1919, the Romanian Red Cross becomes one of the first Societies to adhere to the recently founded League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

During the period between the two World Wars, the Romanian Red Cross assumes the difficult task of fighting against the spread of infectious diseases by organizing, in cooperation with the health care authorities, health centres and summer camps for children.

In March 1924, King Ferdinand ratifies the "Bill for Recognizing a Juridical Status for the

Romanian Red Cross Society" which has previously been passed by the Parliament.

Beginning with March 1939, when the first wave of refugees reaches the country, relief operations are carried out in favour of the Polish and Czech civilians and eventually of the Romanians from occupied territories.

During WWII, the Romanian Red Cross sets up its own hospitals, canteens and surgeries.

The coming into power of the Communists lays a heavy mark on the fate of the Romanian Red Cross. It loses all its properties and comes under governmental control. However, it still manages to give assistance to those afflicted by war, orphans, invalids and widows. Red Cross emergency response teams prove to be very effective in providing relief after natural disasters in 1953, 1970 and 1977.

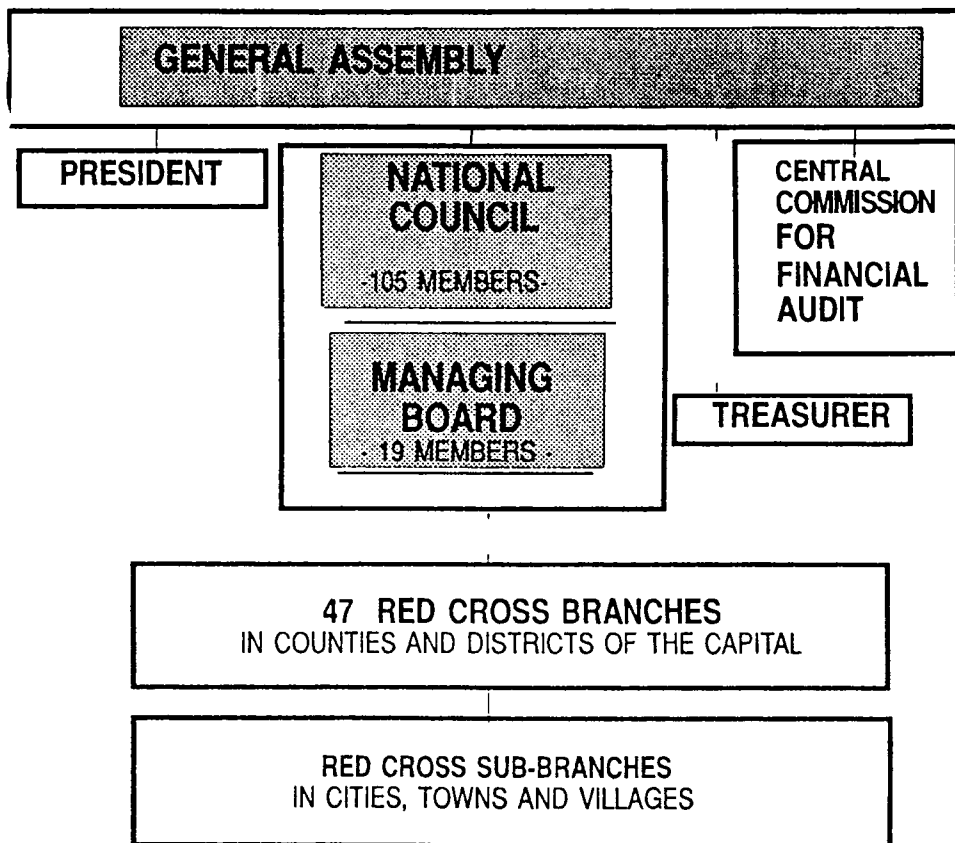
In 1977, the Romanian Red Cross organizes the XXIII International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

After December 1989, as the dictatorship has been abolished, the Romanian Red Cross regains its independence.

A new Statute is adopted and the subsequent period is devoted to re-organizing it on the basis of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.

Now, when the Romanian Red Cross is about to enter its 120th year of existence, the Parliament is considering the Romanian Red Cross Law. Its promulgation will bring about a new juridical framework for the Romanian Red Cross to carry on its humanitarian pursuits.

# ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE



The Romanian Red Cross is organized in the territory according to the existent administrative territorial organization established by the Romanian authorities. Thus, its branches cover the counties and the districts of Bucharest and they enjoy autonomy in:

- organizing and carrying out activities
- estimating and expending their own budget
- establishing relationships with similar foreign organizations after having informed the the National Council of the National Red Cross Society of Romania.

## MEMBERS AND FUNDS

In 1989, The Romanian Red Cross counted aprox. 3 million membership-fee-paying members.

In 1990, it was nevertheless concluded that adherence to the Red Cross organization during the Communist regime was not obtained in conformity with the principle of free option.

Consequently, the process of organizing the Romanian Red Cross on a democratic basis started anew by recruiting new members.

According to the new Statute of the Romanian Red Cross, there are three categories of members:

- active members;
- sponsoring members;
- honorary members.

Between 1990-1995, the number of active members evinces the following evolution:

### ACTIVE MEMBERS

1990		
1993		139 800
1995		224 316

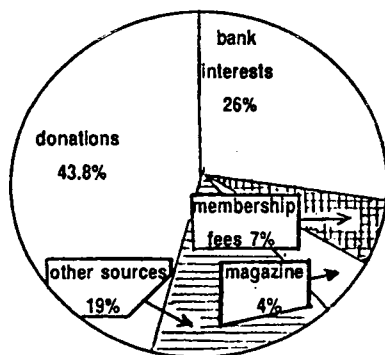
Sponsoring members are in a small number. The great majority of those who support the Red Cross opt for working as volunteers and paying symbolic membership fees.

## FUNDS

The Romanian Red Cross does not benefit from any governmental subsidies. Its funds are obtained only from:

- membership fees;
- donations;
- special fundraising campaigns - usually during "The Red Cross Week";
- bank interests
- incomes from premises rental
- selling the "Sanatatea" magazine

The partition of the different sources could be represented as follows:



## EXPENDITURES

Expenditures are oriented towards developing humanitarian activities, supplying the emergency response teams with the necessary equipment, training voluntary Red Cross nurses and covering administrative costs (Romanian Red Cross has 105 employees).

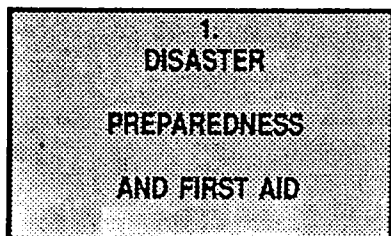
# THE MISSION OF THE ROMANIAN RED CROSS

*According to the Statute of the Romanian Red Cross, its fundamental mission is to prevent and alleviate impartially human suffering, without any discrimination as to nationality, race, sex, social status, religious beliefs, age or political options.*

*The activities of the Romanian Red Cross are conceived on the basis of the Strategic Work-plan of the Federation for the 90's and are intended for the most vulnerable.*

The concept of the development of the Romanian Red Cross has been outlined by the "Guiding Lines for the Development of the National Red Cross Society of Romania" a document adopted in 1990 and 1994.

This document points out seven programmes to which all of our human and material resources have been devoted.



The developments during the interval between 1990 and 1995 have very often forced the Romanian Red Cross to carry out relief

operations for those afflicted by earthquakes, floods and accidents at industrial units.

In order to be able to respond more rapidly and more efficiently in cases of emergency, the following have been secured:

## MATERIAL RESOURCES

- a stock of necessary goods for 5000 people (victims);

- 340 tents to provide shelter to the same number of people;

- one central warehouse;

- 6 regional warehouses;

These warehouses are supplied with goods of necessity in case of disasters: tents, blankets, bed linen, clothing and footwear; the National Council of the Romanian Red Cross and the local branches also have funds for purchasing food and basic goods in case of emergency.

- 3 trucks of 10t each;

- 84 vehicles.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Romanian Red Cross Emergency Response Teams were established in 1990.

- At present, there are 231 ready-to-operate teams, made up of 3930 people.

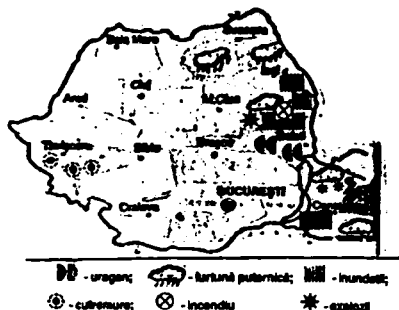
All of the members of these teams have been trained by means of:

- intensive courses on the basis of the handbook published in 1994 with the help of the Norwegian Red Cross (10,000 copies);

- regional workshops;

- camps and seminars for leaders,

- drills carried out in cooperation with teams of Civil Defence, Fire brigade, medical staff



### EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE AT HOME (1990-1995)

-consisting of: First Aid secured to the victims, psychological assistance, shelter in tents, material assistance - beds, clothing, basic food.

1991

July earthquake in Timis county;  
July dam collapse at Onesti which resulted in flooding vast regions of Bacau county;

1992

July - floods in Constanta;  
July - major floods in Bacau;

1993

Jan. - earth-gas pipe explosion at Turburea, in Gorj county;  
July - hurricane at Tulcesti, Galati;

1994

Aug. - fire at Schitu Frumoasa, Bacau;  
Aug. - earth-gas explosion at Comanesti, Bacau;  
Aug. - fire at Comanesti, Bacau;  
Aug. - floods in Husi region, Vaslui.

### OPERATION PLANS

The Romanian Red Cross has identified the regions and the potential threats that might require for the Romanian Red Cross to step into action:

- regions with frequent earthquakes;
- regions with frequent floods;
- regions under threat of nuclear accidents;
- regions under threat of industrial accidents.

### EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE ABROAD (1990 - 1995)

-consisting of : tents, blankets, bed linen, clothing, footwear, basic food, items for personal use, soap, detergent, powder milk, medicine.

1991

June - hurricane in the Republic of Moldova;  
Aug. - on clearance from U.N. 724 Committee, assistance to refugees in former Yugoslavia;

1992

Apr. - floods in the Republic of Moldova

1993

May - on clearance from U.N. 724 Committee, assistance to refugees in F.R. of Yugoslavia;

May - appeal to the President of ICRC in favour of the five prisoners in ILIE ILASCU group, sentenced to death at Tiraspol;

1995

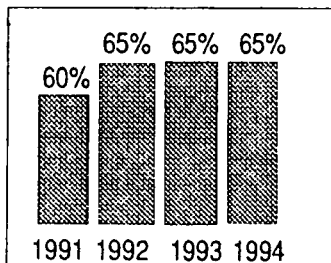
Feb. - assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Kobe, Japan;  
Aug. - assistance to refugees from Krajna  
Sept.- assistance to refugees from Krajna.

## 2 SOCIAL WELFARE

Given the fact that the number of those who turn to the Romanian Red Cross for help and assistance is continuously growing, the social welfare programme has been conceived as a long-term programme. An important percentage of our funds is used for material help for the most vulnerable.

Although the funds which the Romanian Red Cross can make use of are far from covering the needs of the population, our organization does not refrain from carrying out social programmes for the most vulnerable, be they home-based or in special institutions such as homes for the elderly, orphanages, homes for the disabled.

Between 1990 and 1994, Lei 1,223,083,832 have been spent on this programme, which means an important percentage of the Romanian Red Cross funds, as it is shown in the following:



### Current Projects:

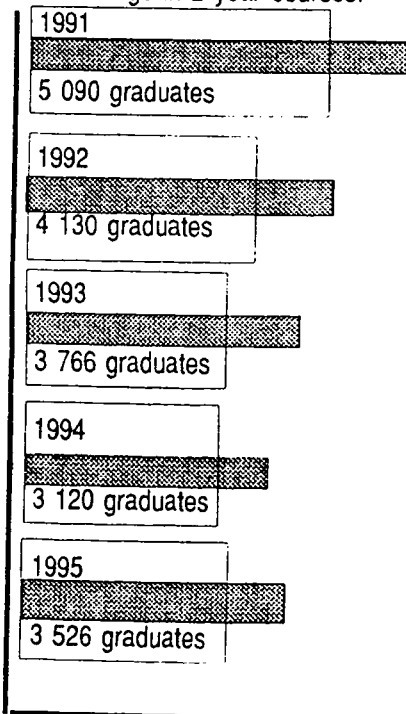
- assistance to elderly at home
- assistance to social canteens
- assistance to orphanages
- assistance to people with low income in the form of "winter programmes"
- occasional assistance to refugees coming to Romania

Social welfare assistance programmes have consisted of:

- hot meals for the poor;
- individual parcels with basic food as part of the "winter programmes";
- summer camps for orphans and for children of poor families;
- entertainment programmes for children with divorced parents;
- presents for children and the elderly on the occasion of Easter, Christmas, 1st of June;
- birthday celebrations for old people in homes for the elderly;
- entertainment performances in orphanages and homes for the elderly.
- contests and camps for handicapped children.

### 3. TRAINING FOR VOLUNTARY RED CROSS NURSES

This programme is in close connection with the disaster preparedness and the social welfare programmes. In order to be able to carry out these programmes, between 1991 and 1995, 19,632 young women, aged 17 to 35, have been trained free of charge in 2 year courses:



The training of voluntary Red Cross nurses - in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Health - is the activity with the longest tradition in the history of the Romanian Red Cross. The first course was organized in 1877.



The theoretical and practical courses are offered free of charge and held by hundreds of physicians, volunteers of the Romanian Red Cross.

Voluntary Red Cross nurses make up an important part of the volunteers.

Looking after the military and civilians, injured or sick, in hospitals behind the front line, assisting the elderly and the children in specialized institutions, or bringing aids from the Red Cross to sick people without family, the voluntary Red Cross nurses enjoy unanimous appreciation.

Three of them have had the honour of being awarded the "Florence Nightingale" medal.



#### 4. PROMOTING THE VOLUNTARY NON-REMUNERATED BLOOD DONATION AND PREVENTING INFECTION WITH HIV / AIDS

This programme has been conceived in the idea of continuing a traditional activity of the Romanian Red Cross. Its deployment is however difficult, not only because of the socio-economic circumstances, but also, and mainly, because of the present law system which maintains remunerated donation and does not promote voluntary and non-remunerated donation, as it is defined by the Ethical Code of the Blood Donor, adopted as such by the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

In spite of these, we have produced 10,000 posters, one video-tape and two short films.

Fighting against the spread of AIDS in Romania requires cooperation with the authorities and with other NGO's.

Starting with 1992, there have been organized 7 training seminars for 150 volunteers to work among the young people.

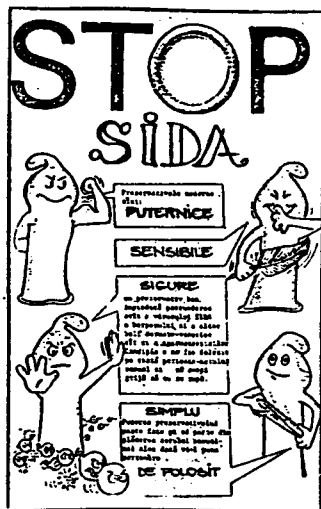
At present, we follow two objectives:

- informing the population, especially the young segment of it, about means of preventing the infection;

- setting up counselling services for the infected.

Information is carried out through:

- the "Sanatatea" magazine;
- "STOP AIDS" and "PASSPORT FOR PASSING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT AIDS" leaflets (100,000 copies);
- video tapes produced by the Romanian Red Cross



These are made use of as part of the activities for the young people.

Every year, on the International Day of Fight Against AIDS, we set up information centres in major cities of Romania.

#### 5. YOUTH PROGRAMME

This programme aims not only at imbuing the young generation with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, but mainly at obtaining their participation in all the structures and programmes of the Romanian Red Cross.

Specific activities in this domain are:

- training activities;

- seminars for the young leaders;

- the "Skilled First Aiders" contest, organized in schools, at the level of towns, counties and at national level.

## 6. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW DISSEMINATION AND INFORMATION

### INFORMATION

It has aimed at putting forth a new image of the Romanian Red Cross not only as a result of its activities but also by permanently and accurately informing the general public about it.

The information activities have had as target groups the new members of the Society, the employees and the volunteers alike, and the general public reached at by means of mass-media.

It has consisted mainly of disseminating the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and its Mission in our present world, of presenting the activities carried out by it both inside Romania and abroad.

With this purpose there have been organized press conferences at the national and at the local level, seminars, training courses.

The Romanian Red Cross has also published a great number of posters and leaflets. We are now working at a new volume to present the history of the Romanian Red Cross.

### DISSEMINATION

According to the dissemination programme conceived by the ICRC and by the Federation, the following target-groups have been delimited: volunteers, journalists, clergymen, military personnel, scholars and youth.

With assistance from ICRC and the Federation there have been organized 5 regional seminars, training courses for volunteers, exhibitions and reunions in

cooperation with the Romanian Association for Humanitarian Law and the Pilot-Centre for IHL of the Army.

In 1991, the Romanian Red Cross organized the first national symposium on implementation of IHL in Romania.

There have been printed translations of ICRC works, i.e. 4 posters, leaflets on IHL, 9 brochures - all in all 600,000 copies.

## 7. OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

Because after WWII the Romanian Red Cross was bereft of all its properties, in December 1989 our Society had neither premises of its own, nor warehouses, nor means of transport.

The Operational Autonomy Programme aims at securing and consolidating real autonomy for the Romanian Red Cross, which is to be achieved as a result of an average term process, both through its own resources and through international help.

### 1995: PROPERTIES OF THE ROMANIAN RED CROSS

central warehouse	1	
regional warehouses	6	
branch premises	29	
10t. trucks	3	
vehicles	84	
fax machines	48	

An important achievement is the final draft of the "Law Concerning the Functioning of the National Red Cross Society of Romania" which has already been passed by the Senate and is being considered by the House of Deputies.

# DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Romanian Red Cross policy in the domain of international relations aims at expanding cooperation with:

- the international organizations of the Red Cross and Red Crescent - the Federation and International Committee of the Red Cross;

- the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

- other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental alike;

## RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

From 1990 until June 1994, the Federation had a permanent Mission in Bucharest.

The role of this Mission was to coordinate delegations in Romania representing National Societies from:

Austria, Great Britain, Belgium, Den-



mark, Switzerland, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Holland, Norway, Sweden.

In 1992, the " Framework Agreement for Development of Cooperation " was signed in the Hague by the Romanian Red Cross and the Federation

This document stipulates the role to be played by the Romanian Red Cross in establishing and coordinating the national programmes for its development, the Federation providing the technical counselling and coordinating international financial assistance.

In 1992, the *Spinal Cord Injured Unit* was inaugurated in Bucharest, following the cooperation between the Federation, the Romanian Red Cross and the Ministry of Health.

## **RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS**

From December 1989 until March 1993, ICRC had a permanent Mission in Bucharest.

Assistance from ICRC resulted in

- support to the Romanian Red Cross in defining and carrying out its programme of IHL dissemination.

- printing an important number of leaflets and posters for promoting IHL and the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross

- carrying out a programme for securing 150 Romanian hospitals with standard surgery units in 1990

## **RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONAL SOCIETIES**

Between 1991 and 1994, there were 11 National Societies from Western European countries to work in Romania. But in as much as the implementation of Romanian Red Cross programmes, only few National Societies became involved. With them, the Romanian Red Cross has signed the following agreements of cooperation:

- in September 1992 - with the Norwegian Red Cross and the Federation: The Tripartite Cooperation Agreement;

- in June 1994 - with the German Red Cross The Bilateral Cooperation Agreement;

- in September 1995 - with the Mace-

donian Red Cross : the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement;

- due to be signed, The Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of China.

Besides these agreements, the Romanian Red Cross encourages its branches to sign bilateral agreements with other similar organizations from other countries.

There have been signed agreements with branches from: Germany, Sweden, France, Italy, Macedonia, Republic of Moldova

## **REGIONAL RELATIONS**

These years, the Balkan region has faced tensions and military conflicts. They resulted in heavy casualties and millions of victims among the civilians women and children mainly.

In the spirit of the Fundamental Principles and of the traditional relationships with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the Balkans, especially in the former Yugoslavia, the Romanian Red Cross has contributed, even though with limited resources, to assisting the victims of this conflict, especially the refugees in F. R. of Yugoslavia.

With other National Societies in the region the Romanian Red Cross maintains relations of cooperation, considering however that more efforts have to be invested in order to achieve a more concrete and efficient cooperation in the region.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

### TRACING SERVICE

It started to function in 1917, when a great part of Romania was under military occupation. The first activity was the publication of a Red Cross Bulletin containing information about people who had lost contact with their relatives. Between 1936 and 1945 tens of thousand of Poles, Czechs and Romanians turned to this service to send and receive news about their families. After the war, this service was involved in tracing people who were killed or deported during the war.

Between 1990 and 1995, the Romanian Red Cross has received 11,305 letters with requests of this type:

Tracing people in Romania	5625
Tracing people abroad	3581
Messages for relatives in Romania	381
Messages for relatives abroad	476
Tracing graves in Romania	759
Tracing graves abroad	412
Certificates for prisoners and deported	71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11305</b>

This service is run only by volunteers.

### SEA RESCUE SERVICE

In 1993, a rescue team was organized on the Black Sea coast with assistance from the Norwegian Red Cross.

This team is made up of 45 volunteers, aged 17 to 25, who have followed specific training in drowning rescue.

The team, called "Littoral", covers 9 km of coast 16 hours a day, securing First Aid to drowning people and preventing accidents on sea. It is equipped with radio, saving boat, tents.

### "SANATATEA" MAGAZINE

This publication has been edited by the Romanian Red Cross since 1953.

This magazine covers medical issues of interest for the general public, aiming at informing its readers about the mission of the Red Cross and, at the same time, at preventing the spreading of infectious diseases including AIDS, preventing accidents, at providing knowledge about First Aid. Its present output amounts to 30,000 copies.

## AN EVALUATION AND A FEW QUESTIONS

*These are, very briefly,  
some of the accomplishments  
of the Romanian Red Cross  
after a period of hard work  
based on its own effort  
and on international assistance.  
Is it much?  
Is it little?*

The figures presented here sum up short evaluations carried out at the end of each year.

Looking back, after five difficult years, the Romanian Red Cross still has questions to itself, no matter how clear its mission and objectives are defined.

On this assessment depends, to a great extent, its future development, its role within the Romanian society, its very position within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its profile on the threshold of the third millennium.

1.  
DOES THE ROMANIAN RED CROSS  
MATCH THE IMAGE IT WANTED TO  
HAVE IN THE EYE OF THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC?

2.  
SHOULD OUR RECENTLY, AND AT  
THE COST OF GREAT EFFORTS, RE-  
GAINED AUTONOMY AND  
INDEPENDENCE WORRY US?

3.  
HAS THE ROMANIAN RED CROSS  
DONE ITS BEST TO ATTRACT, TO  
TRAIN AND, ABOVE ALL, TO RETAIN  
ITS VOLUNTEERS?

4.  
ARE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE RO-  
MANIAN RED CROSS MADE KNOWN  
WELL ENOUGH, BOTH AT HOME AND  
ABROAD?

5.  
COULD WE LOOK CONFIDENTLY  
TOWARDS THE FUTURE AS FAR AS  
THE HUMAN AND MATERIAL RE-  
SOURCES OF THE ROMANIAN RED  
CROSS ARE CONCERNED?

These are essential questions which do not call for simple "yes" or "no" answers.

Whatever these answers might be, the Romanian Red Cross keeps alive its hope!

**THE NATIONAL RED CROSS  
SOCIETY OF ROMANIA**

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## CRUCEA ROȘIE ROMÂNĂ 1876-1996

Societatea Națională  
de Cruce Roșie din  
România a fost creată  
la 4 Iulie 1876. În cei  
120 de ani care au tre-  
cut de atunci, ea a fost  
în permanență alături  
de oamenii aflați în su-  
ferință ajutându-i, îm-  
bărbătându-i aducând

o rază de speranță în sufletele celor năpăstuiți de neazuri și dureri.  
Milioane de oameni au găsit alinare la Crucea Roșie Română. Între  
aceștia: soldați răniți pe câmpurile de luptă, prizonieri de război,  
populație civilă, persoane vârstnice neajutorate, orfani, handicapați,  
victime ale catastrofelor naturale (cutremure, inundații etc.) care s-au  
abătut asupra țării noastre sau a altor țări. Pentru a-i putea ajuta, în  
continuare, pe semenii noștri - din ce în ce mai mulți - care ne solicită  
permanent sprijinul, Crucea Roșie Română are nevoie de ajutorul și  
sprijinul populației, al tuturor românilor, oameni buni, generoși și en-  
tuziaști, al Tău, stimate posesor al acestui modest calendar! Deviza

Crucii Roșii Române  
este: sărac nu este omul  
care nu a avut nicioda-  
tă nimic, cu adevărat  
sărac este acela care nu a  
ajutat niciodată pe ni-  
meni! Să facem astfel ca  
în România să nu mai  
existe oameni săraci!  
Dumnezeu să ne ajute!!!

1876-1996  
CRUCEA ROȘIE ROMÂNĂ