

Resolution No. 6/2021

Of the National Assembly of the Polish Red Cross of 25 September 2021

**Regarding the programmatic and organizational report of the Society in the year 2020**

Acting on the basis of Article 27, section 3, subsection a) of the Statute of the Polish red Cross,

The National Assembly of the Polish Red Cross

certifies the programmatic and organizational report of the Society for the year 2020, which constitutes an appendix to this resolution.

The resolution takes effect on the day of its signing

Secretary of the proceedings  
For the National Congress of the PRC

[signed]

Waldemar Gołaś

Chairman of the proceedings  
For the National Congress of the PRC

[signed]

Jerzy Zaborowski

EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF THE POLISH RED CROSS



2020  
PROGRAMMATIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
REPORT  
OF THE POLISH RED CROSS

Warsaw, September 2020

## I. Introduction

The *Programmatic and Organizational Report of the Polish Red Cross for 2020* has been compiled on the basis of reports of the boards of Regional Branches as well as the Polish Red Cross Headquarters. In accordance with the Article 33(2)(9), “the Director General of the PRC presents the report of the Society’s activities to the Executive Board of the PRC”, and the Governing Board recommends them to the supreme statutory body, the PRC National Assembly. Under Article 27, section 3, subsection a and b of the Polish Red Cross Statute, the National Assembly is responsible for review of the programmatic and operational, as well as financial reports regarding the Society’s activities in a given year.

In accordance with Article 34(2)(2) as well as Article 27(3) of the PRC Statute, the reports mentioned above are basis for the formulation of an opinion by the National Audit Committee and a motion to the National Assembly concerning the vote of discharge of duties for the PRC National Board and its members in the preceding year.

The Polish Red Cross, being a public benefit organization, files an annual activity report, certified by the National Assembly of the Polish Red Cross, with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and publishes it for public access on the website [www.pck.pl](http://www.pck.pl).

Reports on the Polish Red Cross activities are a source of extensive knowledge on the operations of the organization, the programmatic strategy it implements (certified by a resolution of the National Assembly of the PRC for the duration of its term); they are also documents of historical nature, summarizing subsequent years of activity of a Society with more than an century of heritage and universal, timeless values.

The report presented below also provides knowledge of activities of nearly all of the Society’s components in the uniquely challenging period of COVID-19 pandemic, affecting Poland in the year that the report is covering.

## II. Details of the public benefit organization

1. Polski Czerwony Krzyż (Polish Red Cross), ul. Mokotowska 14, 00-561 Warsaw, Poland, entry in the court register (KRS) No. 0000225587, date of entry: 24 January 2005, REGON statistical identifier: 007023731.

The Polish Red Cross was established as “Polskie Towarzystwo Czerwonego Krzyża” (Polish Society of the Red Cross) on 18 January 1919, and has been known as “Polski Czerwony Krzyż” (Polish Red Cross) abbreviated to “PCK” (“PRC”) since 1927. It was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross on 14 July 1919 and accepted in the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, now the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, on 16 September 1919. The Polish Red Cross is a national Red Cross society within the meaning of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (Dziennik Ustaw – Polish Journal of Laws of 1956, No. 38, item 171) and their Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977 (Dziennik Ustaw – *Polish Journal of Laws* of 1992, No.

41, item 175) and 9 December 2005 (Dziennik Ustaw – *Polish Journal of Laws* of 2009, No. 127, item 1049), to which Poland is a party.

Legal basis of the activity of PRC:

- Act of 16 November 1964 on the Polish Red Cross (consolidated text: Dziennik Ustaw – *Polish Journal of Laws* of 2019, item 179);
  - Statute, approved in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 September 2011 (Dziennik Ustaw – *Polish Journal of Laws* of 12 October 2011, No. 217, item 1284);
  - Resolutions of the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
2. The Polish Red Cross has a legal identity. The Society is established for an indeterminate period.
  3. The emblem of the Society is a red cross on a white background, used independently or in combination with the words “Polski Czerwony Krzyż” (Polish Red Cross). The terms of use and protection of the red cross emblem are defined in the PRC Act, regulations issued by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and applicable Polish laws and regulations.
  4. The Polish Red Cross is a voluntary organisation which supports public authorities in humanitarian activities according to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols as the only national Red Cross society authorised to operate in Poland. In its relations with public authorities, the Society remains autonomous as necessary at each time to pursue the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.
  5. According to Article 8 of the PRC Statute, “The aim of the Polish Red Cross is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in all situations and at all times, impartially and without any discrimination, especially on grounds of nationality, ethnicity, social background, race, sex, religion or political opinions.”
  6. The fundamental programmatic document of the Society is the “*Polish Red Cross Strategy for the Term of 2016 – 2020*”, approved by *Resolution 7/2016* of the PRC National Congress of 19 June 2016. The restrictions caused by the state of epidemic, implemented in our country, made it impossible to hold the National Assembly in 2020 in order to adopt a strategy for the upcoming years.
  7. The fundamental units of the Society are chapters, clubs or groups of members. Units may be organised in any community, in particular at a place of residence or work, at schools, at universities, and at PRC boards. Furthermore, the Society has regional branches and district branches active across Poland. All organisational units participate in the national organisation of the Polish Red Cross. The supreme authority of the Society is the National Congress: a reporting and electing assembly held every four years; an ordinary assembly held every year; and an extraordinary assembly held as required. The main authorities of the Society include the PRC Executive Board and its Bureau.
  8. Since 28 June 2019 the PRC Executive Board has the following members:
    - Stanisław Kracik – President,

- Jarosław Cieszkiewicz – Vice President (Wielkopolska Region),
- Jerzy Kornaus – Vice President (Małopolska Region),
- Jerzy Bisek – Member (Lubelskie Region),
- Marek Brodzki – Member (Lower Silesian Region),
- Jolanta Chełmińska – Member (Łódzkie Region),
- Jerzy Kotowicz – Member (Mazowieckie Region),
- Zdzisław Martyniuk – Member (Lubuskie Region)
- Zbigniew Misiejuk – Member (Podlaskie Region),
- Antoni Olak – Member (Podkarpackie Region),
- Anna Zacharek – Member (Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region).

9. Since of 19 June 2016, the Bureau of the PRC Executive Board is comprised of:

- Stanisław Kracik – President,
- Jarosław Cieszkiewicz – Vice President,
- Jerzy Kornaus – Vice President,
- Jolanta Chełmińska – Member,
- Jerzy Kotowicz – Member.

Due to Mr. Jerzy Kornaus' resignation from the position of Vice President, the Executive Board elected Mr. Zbigniew Misiejuk to the positions of Polish Red Cross Vice President and Member of the PRC Executive Board Bureau by adopting *Resolution No. 587/2020* of the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross of 8 October 2020, concerning the election of the Polish Red Cross Vice President and the composition of Bureau. *Resolution No. 588/2020* adopted by the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross confirmed the distribution of functions among the members of the Executive Board. Since that day those bodies consist of the following persons:

Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross

- Stanisław Kracik – President,
- Jarosław Cieszkiewicz – Vice President (Wielkopolska Region),
- Zbigniew Misiejuk – Vice President (Podlaskie Region),
- Jerzy Bisek – Member (Lubelskie Region),
- Marek Brodzki – Member (Lower Silesian Region),
- Jolanta Chełmińska – Member (Łódzkie Region),
- Jerzy Kornaus – Member (Małopolska Region),
- Jerzy Kotowicz – Member (Mazowieckie Region),
- Zdzisław Martyniuk – Member (Lubuskie Region)
- Antoni Olak – Member (Podkarpackie Region),
- Anna Zacharek – Member (Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region).

Bureau of the PRC Executive Board:

- Stanisław Kracik – President,
- Jarosław Cieszkiewicz – Vice President (Wielkopolska Region),

- Zbigniew Misiejuk – Vice President (Podlaskie Region),
- Jolanta Chełmińska – Member (Łódzkie Region),
- Jerzy Kotowicz – Member (Mazowieckie Region).

### III. Statutory activities

#### III. 1.1 Implementation of the Polish Red Cross Strategy.

In June of 2016 the PRC National Assembly adopted the *Strategy of the Polish Red Cross for the Years 2016-2020*, which indicated the following areas of prioritized activity:

1. Preparation for action in the event of disaster and accident and provision of aid to victims;
2. Development of programmatic activities aiding the least privileged social groups;
3. Promotion of healthy lifestyles and development of the Polish Red Cross voluntary blood donation programme;
4. Dissemination of the fundamental principles and humanitarian values of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts, fostering tolerance and respect for human dignity;
5. Strengthening the substantive, organisational and financial capacity of the Polish Red Cross as necessary to effectively pursue the statutory mission.

The following were the most important areas of public benefit activity undertaken by the Polish Red Cross in 2020:

- Welfare aid, excluding accommodation, including aid for families and persons in a difficult situation as well as seniors, creating equal opportunities for such families and persons, home-based nursing care;
- Protection and promotion of health, promoting the ideals of voluntary blood donation;
- Rescue operations and civil protection.

As was already mentioned, due to the state of pandemic restrictions the PRC National Assembly was not held in 2020 and because of this the programmatic strategy for upcoming years was not adopted. The Society worked on the basis of *Polish Red Cross Strategy for the Years 2016 – 2020*, expanding the scope of its activity to include mitigation of the pandemic's effects and limiting its reach.

III. 1.1 In the area of preparedness for disasters and accidents and provision of aid to victims in 2020 the statutory goals of the Polish Red Cross, i.e. tracing of missing persons, providing aid to victims of disasters, strengthening society's preparedness for disasters, were realized through the PRC Rescue System. It is comprised of 16 PRC Rescue groups, 2 PRC Medical Rescue Groups and a PRC Special Rescue Group. The aforementioned groups consist of over 400 PRC Rescuers, including medical doctors, nurses, paramedics, rescuers certified in Qualified First Aid and specialists in various fields of rescue operations.

The PRC Rescue System pursues its mission under the Act of 16 November 1964 on the Polish Red Cross (*Dziennik Ustaw – Polish Journal of Laws* No. 41, item 276), the PRC Statute approved in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 September 2011 (*Dziennik Ustaw – Polish Journal of Laws* No. 217, item 1284), as well as the *Agreement Concerning the Terms and Conditions of Cooperation Between the Polish Red Cross and Fire Protection Units of the National Rescue and Fire Protection System*, concluded with the Commander in Chief of the State Fire Department on 26 August 2013, and the *Agreement Concerning the Terms and Conditions and the Scope of Cooperation in Preparation and Execution of Civil Protection Projects* of 31 May 1996 concluded with the Chief of the National Civil Protection Service. Those activities are supported by agreements concerning cooperation in rescue and humanitarian aid operations concluded by the Polish Red Cross with the State Fire Department (Regional Sections), the Police, the Border Guards, and the Civil Protection Service.

The mission of the PRC Rescue System, i.e. to prevent and alleviate human suffering, is pursued through civil protection and rescue operations in the event of natural and man-made disasters, including engineering disasters, by providing medical and logistical aid from the Polish Red Cross. PRC Rescue Groups fill a gap in rescue operations, some of which cannot be carried out by the State Medical Rescue Service equipped with S-type (specialty) and P-type (basic) ambulances. The Rescue Groups also support units of the National Rescue and Fire Protection System in medical rescue of persons at immediate health risk at the location of a disaster, and improve efficiency of rescue operations; they also strengthen and maintain adequate training of members. Aid provided by the Polish Red Cross is addressed to Polish nationals, as well as foreigners within the national territory, who are affected by extraordinary circumstances.

In the year 2020, the following activities were performed by the PRC Rescue System:

- 8 training sessions concerning topics of rescue operations in the area of a structure collapse. Over 200 rescuers from entire Poland participated in the trainings. The theoretical and practical workshops explored themes of work safety in the area of structure collapse, evacuation of affected persons from spaces with difficult access, completing tasks with insufficient equipment and manpower as well as management of rescue operations.
- 14 training sessions concerning search for persons lost outdoors, conducted for over 280 participant rescuers. The trainings explored the use of GPS satellite navigation devices and methods of on-the-ground searching.

The priority of training focused on searching for missing persons outdoors is to establish permanent presence of PRC Rescue Groups in search operations. PRC Rescue System units were engaged by the Police in such efforts on at least 56 occasions from January to December 2020. This commitment follows from a letter of intent concerning close cooperation and assistance based on the capacity and resources of the Polish Red Cross made available in search operations carried out by the Police, including the Missing Persons Tracing Centre of the National Police Headquarters, of which the PRC Rescue Groups are members.

2020 was a unique year for the Polish Red Cross Rescue System because of the pandemic of COVID-19, an acute infectious disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which presented the following additional challenges to the PRC Rescue Groups:

- Supporting organisation and realisation of personal protection equipment transports,
- Building and operating places for pre-selection of patients who may be sick with COVID-19,
- Building and operating places of temporary accommodation for persons in quarantine,
- Conducting pre-selection of patients who may be sick with COVID-19 in hospitals,
- Supporting the national system of Emergency Medical Services in the area of provision of aid to victims of so-called isolated medical events, reported through the 112 emergency number.

Another challenge for the PRC Rescue Groups were protests of various social groups in Poland, during which the Groups provided medical support while remaining impartial.

The **Pomeranian Regional Branch** of the Polish Red Cross has two units of PRC Rescue System – PRC Rescue Group in Wejherowo and PRC Special Rescue Group Tricity. The units have 45 highly trained members (medical doctors, paramedics, and Qualified First Aid rescuers). They have the necessary equipment which meets the standard of the Society. The spatialized rescue has three sections: water rescue with divers, altitude rescue, and rescue dogs. Members of groups keep raising their qualifications, they participate in regular exercises, cooperate with the state agencies and are engaged in their activities; they also provide support during events and teach first aid.

The Silesian Regional Branch of the PRC had 3 PRC Rescue Groups active in its area, 2 of them at the PRC District Branch in Bielsko-Biala and 1 Rescue Group at the PRC District Branch in Zabrze.

The Rescue Groups at the PRC District Branch in Bielsko-Biała were cooperating, according to needs, with the State Fire Service, the Police, the City Guard, Emergency Medical Services, Polish Medical Air Rescue, Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue, Tatra Volunteer Search and Rescue, and Water Volunteer Search and Rescue, as well as Medical Rescue Teams, Mining Rescue, and the Military Medical Service.

The Rescue Groups at PRC District Branch in Zabrze cooperated with the Volunteer Fire Department in Zabrze-Mikulczyce, VFD in Zabrze-Grzybowice, and Department for Crisis Management and Civil Protection of the City Hall of Zabrze.

In 2020 the Rescue Teams have conducted the following free-of-charge and paid activities:

- Providing support during public gatherings and events, including sporting events;
- Rescue demonstrations;
- Exercisers / manoeuvres / competitions: internal for the Group, internal for the System, and with professional or volunteer units.



Regional First Aid Championship has not taken place in 2020 in accordance with Executive Board Resolution No. 533/2020 concerning the decision to not organize the Polish Red Cross National First Aid Championship.

In the **West Pomeranian Regional Branch of the PRC** the Koszalin Rescue Group continued its activities in 2020, in cooperation with the State Medical Rescue Service. The group is actively developing and promoting the Red Cross ideals in the city of Koszalin and the surrounding region. During the Rescue Group members assembly of 14 December 2019, Senior Rescuer of the PRC Paweł Ochim was elected to the role of Group Chief. He is a licenced paramedic who has already been performing this role for three terms. The Rescue Group has its space and warehouse in the building leased by the Koszalin Board of Residential Buildings to the PRC Regional Branch in Koszalin. The space is used for organisation of trainings for the Group members and ensuring the unit's continuous readiness, as well as availability of storage space.

In 2020 **PRC RG Koszalin conducted 3 demonstrations and trainings and provided medical support 126 times (including 114 free of charge)** during sporting and recreational events, including during the 10<sup>th</sup> International Winter Swimming Rally in Mielno. Due to the pandemic the aid was also provided in places of quarantine – Rescue Group Koszalin delivered food packages for people living in poverty, the elderly and persons in quarantine. It also provided support for the Municipal Police in securing the closed Koszalin Cemetery. The Koszalin Rescue Group was provided support mostly during foot races, including a night-time marathon and half-marathon race, as well as 8 sporting events in Mielno.

The PRC Rescue Group Koszalin has been realising the “Mielno Rescue Bicycle Patrols” project, lasting from July 1<sup>st</sup> until September 2<sup>nd</sup>, for the last 13 years. Two two-person teams supported the Mielno Water Volunteer Search and Rescue in securing beaches in the following towns and villages: Mielno, Unieście, Sarbinowo, Chłopy and Mielenko. The Mielno Rescue Bicycle Patrols were tasked with moving quickly within the area of Mielno Commune and providing aid to tourists and local inhabitants. They **intervened on 89 occasions in total**. The Koszalin Rescue Group received a grant of **PLN 10 000** (GR's financial contribution: **PLN 1,09**) to realise those activities.

Since the beginning of March 2020 the PRC Rescue Group Koszalin was engaged in COVID-19 response. The logistical and rescue equipment was inspected and analysed. Since May 2020, as a way of supporting the State Medical Rescue Service and in cooperation with Amazon.com, Inc., there has been an influx of equipment for the construction of Temporary Accommodation for 190 people. At the start of the activities, cooperation was initiated as well as free-of-charge use of the Market Hall in Koszalin, in which 3 tonnes of logistical equipment were stored until October 30<sup>th</sup>. In October the PRC Rescue Group Koszalin received a logistical trailer, equipped for aid activates in the event of disaster or epidemic, of value equivalent to **PLN 56 500**.

A conference of the representatives of the Voivodship Formation of Civil Protection, constituted by the Voivode Ordinance, has been held on 26 February 2020 at the West

Pomeranian Voivodship Office. The PRC Rescue Group Koszalin was incorporated in the Formation.

At the **Wielkopolskie Regional Branch of the PRC**, the PRC Rescue Group Poznań has engaged in activities in the area of creation and operation of an isolation ward dedicated to the care of patients suffering from the SARS-CoV-2 infection at Ikar Hotel in Poznań. Those activities were conducted from the 1<sup>st</sup> until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in cooperation with the Wielkopolska Voivodship Office and Józef Struś Multi-Specialist Municipal Hospital in Poznań. The Groups responsibilities included: supervising the emergency contact number, 24 hour supervision of the hotel building, receiving and delivering packages to the patients, and daily preparation and distribution of meals to the patients.

Thanks to the sponsors' help, it was possible to support the institutions most vulnerable to infection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elderly persons and people living with disabilities have the highest risk of coronavirus infection. Wielkopolskie Regional Branch of the PRC in Poznań donated personal protection equipment (surgical masks, gloves, face shields and disinfectant) to places where those items were limited and needs were most urgent, i.e. nursing homes in Poznań as well as schools and centres working with children and youth with disabilities.

Personal protection equipment was also provided to paramedics working in substations of emergency medical services, facilities where ambulances await calls, and hospitals.

In 2020 the Society had **1 Humanitarian Aid Group**, comprising of 14 members. It did not participate in activities utilizing equipment and skills. It organised 4 first aid demonstrations. It provided aid to 20 people.

In preparation for action in the event of disasters, the Society maintained **11 regional and 9 district warehouses, capable of providing aid to 7.828 persons**. Aid was provided to 828 persons.

One of the important goals set out by the Strategy and outlined by the PRC Executive Board is raising awareness and practical skills of the society in the area of first aid.

Due to the pandemic, in 2020 the Polish Red Cross has limited the scope of its training and popularization activities concerning first aid. The necessary safety measures did not allow for promotional and educational activities to be as robust as in previous years.

The **Education and Training Centre**, in cooperation with the Programmatic Commission on First Aid, has undertaken activities appropriate to the existing situation.

The official Polish Red Cross website was changed to provide new graphics for the sections concerning first aid and to make the contents clearer; the website is now easier to use for persons seeking to contact the appropriate Regional Branch.

Furthermore, every Regional Branch, the Programmatic Commission on First Aid, and Regional Coordinators have been provided with access to Microsoft Teams platform, which allows for holding safe meetings and discussion.

Trainings were conducted in accordance with the European Resuscitation Council guidelines; the implementation of guidelines of the Global First Aid Reference Centre was continued in a manner and scope that was appropriate for the state of epidemic.

The PRC First Aid Championship is an important component of activities promoting knowledge and skills concerning first aid, and a special event that engages structures of the PRC at every level. Due to the pandemic restrictions, the Executive Board adopted *Resolution No. 533/2020 of 23 march 2020 concerning the decision to not organize the Polish Red Cross National First Aid Championship*. The decision was motivated by concern for health and safety of all persons that would take part in the event. The Championship will be resumed as soon as the epidemiological situation in the country is stabilized.

In accordance with the System of trainings, all PRC regions have regional first aid coordinators who organise trainings for companies and institutions in cooperation with the first aid instructors. Depending on the part of the country, courses are organised periodically for persons approaching the Polish Red Cross individually in order to complete first aid training.

Standard responsibilities of the regional coordinators include visitation during courses and organisation of meetings and workshops for their subordinate instructors. Due to the epidemiological circumstances, those activities were limited.

In 2020, 321 instructors were active in the country. Of those, 125 were engaged in training activities. Among other didactic aids, the instructors had first aid training mannequins available to them: 334 of the “adult” type and 137 of the “child” type (including AED type 79) as well as 83 laptops and 73 multimedia projectors.

Further ongoing activities included prolongation of the PRC First Aid Instructors’ certificates. In 2020 41 persons had their certificates prolonged upon request from the Boards of Regional Branches; the prolongation was refused to 14 people. Certificates were granted to 23 new instructors.

Over the course of the year, the database of PRC First Aid Instructors was being updated with new information. Updating of the card file containing information on all PRC First Aid Instructors was continued.

Issuing of identification cards to instructors was also an ongoing effort. The identification card is the size of a credit card, and it includes the following information: photograph, first name and surname of the instructor, number of certificate, date of receiving certificate and the date it expires. The identification cards are issued to all new instructor and to those whose

certificates are prolonged, or if they report losing or damaging their card. The identification cards are distributed through the Regional Branches of the PRC.

In 2020 the Programmatic Commission on First Aid comprised of the following members:

- Marek Brodzki
- Dawid Drożdż
- Tomasz Klimczyk
- Danuta Lewandowska
- Magdalena Michułka – Kuraś
- Michał Siemiński – the chairman of the commission
- Piotr Skura
- Madalena Stefańska

Due to the epidemiological situation, meetings of the Commission were conducted online.

Due to the epidemiological situation, organization of courses was very limited, but the attestations requested by the Regional Branches were still provided on a regular basis in 2020.

In total, the following numbers of attestations were issued:

- 1 068 core course attestation (with certificates);
- 1 490 elementary course attestations;
- 380 school student certificates issued to PRC regional branches free of charge;
- 775 basic course certificates issued to PRC regional branches free of charge;
- 600 other general course certificates issued to PRC regional branches free of charge.

Regional and District Branches of the PRC organized various activities promoting the role of first aid in saving peoples' lives and health, including:

In **Wielkopolskie Regional Branch**, the PRC Instructors conducted trainings in first aid, as a way raising skills of the society in the area of safe behaviour and first aid; the scope of those activities was limited by sanitary restrictions.

Demonstrations and presentations on first aid, which were adapted to new pandemic procedures, were organized during three outdoor meetings at the National Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa. The analysis conducted and approximate number of materials given out suggest that over 2000 persons interested in first aid have been reached through these activities.

In 2020 the Wielkopolskie Regional Branch implemented an educational program "Help! First Aid Gives a Second Life". The first aid workshops were organized in person at first, and then continued through the Zoom platform, for children in preschools and primary schools in the city of Poznań and the surrounding district. The last part of the project was a competition for a photo album presenting first aid skills. 25 children from 14 schools participated in the competition.

### III. 1.2 Development of programmatic activities aimed at providing aid to the most vulnerable social groups.

A priority area, in which 2 main goals were outlined: improvement of the living conditions of persons in need and prevention of social exclusion of groups and individuals. **In 2020, the Polish Red Cross provided social aid by distributing food packages, clothing, financial aid, etc., to 147 035 individuals**, including:

- 83 653 women,
- 13 529 persons with disabilities,
- 28 525 persons above retirement age (60+),
- 13 932 dependent persons suffering from chronic or incurable diseases,
- 2 909 homeless persons,
- 285 victims of violence,
- 9 639 unemployed persons,
- 61 729 persons living in poverty,
- 470 persons recovering from addiction and their family members,
- 3 791 persons raising children alone,
- 121 persons released from prisons,
- 25 062 children and young people, including 1 965 in communities at risk,
- 2 083 other persons – 1 803 medical services, PRC nurses and social workers, and 280 families with multiple children.

In 2020 **74 415** beneficiaries (including **41 476** women) received ad-hoc aid at least twice a year. The Regional and District Branches expensed **PLN 13 111 435, 81** for ad-hoc aid.

PRC operated **72** warehouses dedicated to storage of ad-hoc aid in 2020.

The **Polish Red Cross operated 81 care units in 2020. 166 contracts were signed with local government to provide home-based nursing care.** In total, **15 070 individuals were care beneficiaries**, including 451 individuals whose care was financed directly from the budget of the Society. Aid provided by neighbours covered 26 individuals (including 13 women). **Care services were provided by 5,362 PRC nurses and social workers.**

It is important to note that the scope of provided care services depends on won tenders, obtained subsidies and signed contracts that allow for realization of this task.

**In 2020 the Polish Red Cross operated 86 different types of care centres with capacity for 2 675 persons. Within the year 5 136 persons benefited from them:** 4 047 as a part free-of-charge operations, 1 068 as part of business operations and 21 as part of paid operations. Within the whole Society, the average cost of facility operation per one patient was PLN 27,29.

The Polish Red Cross distributed food to families in difficult life circumstances in 2020. Meals were offered by **99 facilities** (canteens, cafeterias, schools, care facilities, etc.). In total, **334 020 meals were distributed to 4 379 beneficiaries** including 2 368 children and young people.

The Polish Red Cross expensed **PLN 1 040 672, 23** for free-of-charge meals in 2020, including PLN 281 773, 67 paid directly from the budget of the Society.

The **Operational Programme Food Aid 2014-2020** continued in 2019 and 2020. The Programme is run in the framework of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). It is operated by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, and the National Support Centre for Agriculture in partnership with partner organizations, i.e. national and cross-regional non-governmental organisations: the Polish Red Cross, Caritas Polska, the Federation of Polish Food Banks, and the Polish Social Assistance Committee. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is the managing body of the Programme. The mission of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived is to assist beneficiaries in meeting basic needs in order to help them move out of poverty and facilitate integration with society. The Operational Programme Food Aid supports individuals and families suffering financial deprivation who are unable to meet their nutritional needs.

The Sub-Programme 2019 implemented in 2019 and 2020, aimed to distribute food packs to those in needs, comprised of 21 different foods such as pasta, white rice, pork ham. The end beneficiaries of the Sub-Programme 2019 were mainly individuals and families suffering financial deprivation and supported by welfare centres. The end-beneficiaries of the Programme were selected by local Commune or Municipal Social Welfare Centres. Only the homeless persons were selected as eligible for aid by the organisations participating in the programme. The Sub-Programme 2019 distributed food to 13 PRC warehouses in the following voivodships: Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie, Pomeranian, Silesian, West Pomeranian, Łódzkie, Lubelskie, and Lubuskie. Food was distributed by:

- PRC Lubelskie Regional Branch,
- PRC Lubuskie Regional Branch,
- PRC Łódzkie Regional Branch,
- PRC Mazowieckie Regional Branch,
- PRC Podkarpackie Regional Branch,
- PRC Silesian Regional Branch,
- PRC West Pomeranian Regional Branch,

In total, the Polish Red Cross distributed **5 886 thousand tonnes** of food valued at **PLN 24 853 931**, in **593 552** food packs for **96 579** persons accepted as eligible for food aid, including at least 24 000 children under 15 years of age.

The Sub-Programme 2019 included accompanying measures designed to strengthen independence and skills within households, including:

- Cooking workshops for different age groups delivered by culinary experts, chefs, dieticians, demonstrating cooking techniques and various uses of food products;
- Diet and healthy nutrition workshops;

- Education programmes introducing the principles of healthy eating and prevention of food waste;
- Economic education workshops (how to draft, execute, and evaluate the household budget, how to economise at home, including all financial and in-kind family income including food donations).

The **Yellow Plate Programme** ran since September 2019 for school students from Voivodships: Łódzkie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie and Opolskie. Its beneficiaries were 1 864 students from 15 schools; 94 968 warm meals and 21 060 cold meals were distributed, amounting to 116 028 meals in total. Due to the closing of schools as a pandemic control measure, 654 food packs were prepared for students from the voivodships: Łódzkie, Małopolskie, and Opolskie. This aid was provided to students for whom the school meal was essentially the only one during the day. In schools, classes were held introducing children to the concepts of healthy nutrition on the basis of food pyramid and physical activity, which was discussed during health classes. Workshops taught by specialists and dietitians from Preventive Medicine Center in Łódź were organized. During those health classes students solved crosswords, puzzles and quizzes about healthy lifestyle. They learned about calories, fats, cholesterol, substitutes of salt in cooking, what are the proper portions and quantities of food for children their age.

Activities in the Opolskie region were joined by the Food Bank, that helped in organizing culinary workshops in schools. Children, their parents and grandparents participated in them together. As a reward for the most active participation in charity and ecological activities for their schools, students were taken on a trip to Warsaw. The main event of the trip was a visit to the Domino Effect Workspace of the Kulczyk Foundation, and participation in culinary-educational workshop called “Travel with Wanda”. Ms. Wanda took the children on a tour of the world of food trucks.

During classes on healthy nutrition, the student were discussing healthy food and physical activity, providing examples from their own experience. While working in groups they created a representation of the healthy nutrition pyramid, which has then been placed in the school hall for all students, parents, and guests to see.

A constant goal of the project is to improve the quality and caloric value of the food served in school canteens. The program ensures that meals are nutritionally complete, prepared from appropriate ingredients in correct proportions, according to the introduced Yellow Plate product list. An important point in the program is that providing a cold, afternoon meal is acceptable. Each month the Yellow Plate coordinators organised and conducted a range of educational activities in participating institutions. The activities promoted healthy diets and were aimed at both young and older children, and also at their parents and carers. Health promotion events were organised, which involved workshops, talks, competitions and tournaments. In nearly all of the schools of Łódzkie Voivodship the experimental kitchen classes are continued, during which children learn under the watchful eyes of their teachers how to prepare healthy and tasty meals at home. Schools also introduced the students to rules

of polite behaviour at the table and customs related to eating. During the school year, parents were encouraged to participate in activities concerning healthy nutrition. After an activity around preparing a healthy breakfast it was observed that the parents started to give their children healthy sandwiches and snacks to eat at school. The local neighbourhood was also engaged in the activities promoting healthy nutrition. A range of educational programs was organised in schools informing them of nutritional value of various products and their impact on health; the healthy food pyramid was represented on posters to make students aware of how a balanced diet impacts the functioning of the organism. Parents participated more often than before in culinary classes organised in schools during the whole school year.

Because of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the educational activities in schools were suspended on 12 March 2020. Thanks to the decision of Kulczyk Foundation, which agreed to continue the programme by distributing food packs to the children in need, some schools continued the programme in that manner.

Goals achieved: Improvement in quality and intensity of nutrition is no doubt in part due to catering firms offering various meals, prepared according to the product list of the Yellow Plate. Fresh fruits and vegetables were introduced. Thanks to the programme and consultations with parents, an additional afternoon meal was introduced which is an important improvement of the diets of children who remain at their institution until late afternoon. Children receive yoghurts, portions of cheese, sandwiches made with multigrain bread with ham, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, fish or cheese.

In the current edition, parents participated enthusiastically in the activities accompanying the programme. Additionally, in one of the schools that cooperates with a company "Junior", children were receiving portions of milk. They participated in classes taught by a dietician, organised picnics, providing fruit and vegetables from their own gardens. Those were initially used as festive decoration and later the children used them as ingredients to prepare healthy meals. Coordinator and a few parents organised a trip to an agritourist farm and a milk processing plant.

Banners and informational boards promoting the programme were placed in schools in visible places, as well as photographs of children participating in each month's activities. Every month, information about healthy nutrition classes is put on the school websites. Colourful table mats donated by the Foundation were placed on the tables in school canteens, while posters prepared by the Foundation raise awareness of the students' and parents' environment regarding correct nutrition.

**Regional and District Branches of the PRC have undertaken many actions in 2020 in order to provide aid to the most vulnerable social groups** (in addition to the traditional activities such as "Easter with PRC", "Gold Rush", "School Kits for Students", "Red Cross Christmas").



An important task in the area of social aid and preventative measures for health protection and promotion is a Social Centre in Szczecin, operated by the **West Pomeranian Regional Branch of the PRC**. It is a place where people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless can wash, wait and get warm, and get clothing from the warehouse. In 2020 this Centre's operation was subsidised by the West Pomeranian Voivodship office and the Commune of the City of Szczecin. In total the subsidies amounted to **PLN 88 650, 00** while the PRC expensed **PLN 7 569** from its on budget, and provided personnel whose work is valued at around **PLN 4 969**. Through the services of the Social Center, persons who have no access to bathrooms or hot water at home, as well as persons who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, could maintain cleanliness and personal hygiene, and receive clean clothes, which prevented or minimised the spread of skin and infectious diseases. People living in poverty and homelessness were provided with dignified conditions for normal functioning in society, and the level of comfort of other inhabitants of the city, who share spaces with neglected persons, was raised. It is especially important during the existing epidemiological situation and the related stringent procedures.

In 2020 205 persons registered for the use of the public bathroom (and 106 persons actually used it), including 78 persons referred there by the Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Szczecin. Those persons used the bathroom on 1 151 occasions. Because of the pandemic and special operating procedures issued by the West Pomeranian Voivode, during the first and second waves of pandemic the persons intending to bathe were not registered by name and were not asked to present a referral from the Municipal Social Welfare Centre, which is why the number of beneficiaries is much different than in previous years. It is not, however, indication of lower demand for the services of the Social Centre.

The clothing warehouse services were used by 165 beneficiaries on 845 occasions. 1 141,3 kilograms of clothing, donated by the inhabitants of Szczecin, were distributed.

To manage the risks of the pandemic, special COVID-19 procedures were implemented. In accordance with *Instruction for Operation of the PRC Social Centre During the Coronavirus Alert*, the bathrooms and warehouse were only available to those beneficiaries, who were not quarantined, coughing, or running a fever. Beneficiaries were registered for bathing individually, outside, on a courtyard belonging to the PRC, without close contact with the registering employee; the option of waiting for one's turn to bathe at the Social Centre was suspended. Beneficiaries came to appointments set for specific hours. After each of them bathed, the shower cabin was additionally disinfected and the room was ventilated. In the clothing warehouse, the employees were responsible for selecting the clothing according to the beneficiary's size and needs, and after the recipient collected the clothes and tried them on, there was no possibility of returning the items.

The Society received **6 transports of in-kind donations from abroad, which weighed 10 751 kilograms and were valued at PLN 266 733, 26, as well as 799 924 kilograms of in-kind donations from within the country, which were valued at PLN 7 399 072, 90.**

### III. 1.3 Promoting healthy lifestyles, development of voluntary blood donation

Promotion of guidelines for healthy lifestyle and fostering of pro-health attitudes in society are priority areas of the Polish Red Cross statutory activities. Programmes in these areas are mostly targeted at children and youth, for whom PRC organised **2 075 competitions, trainings, talks, lectures, and other forms of health awareness activity with 71 473 participants.** Further **149 pro-health activities** were organised for **6 000 adult participants.** Those numbers indicate a several-fold decrease in comparison with previous years. For instance, **in 2019** there were **8 028** activities aimed at children and youth with **228 349** participants, and **707 activities** aimed at adults with **71 067 participants.** This considerable difference is a result of pandemic restrictions.

Unchanged over the years is the popularity of **Healthy Lifestyle Promotion Olympics, organised for the 28<sup>th</sup> time in the school year 2019/2020.** In accordance with its statute, it was organised for two age groups: elementary school students, and the above-elementary school students. In general, 22 517 students from 1 099 schools participated in the school-level competition. All of the PRC Regional Branches and most of the District Branches participated in the organisation of the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Olympics. Two initial stages of the Olympics have been held without any issue. However, the pandemic forced organisers in this instance, like in many others, to interrupt this edition of the Olympics, therefore regional and final stages have not taken place.

In the area of health awareness, the prevention of various epidemics is key. Among those special attention is given to HIV/AIDS prevention, due to both inadequate levels of knowledge of the “average Polish person” on this topic, and continually worrisome statistics.

**In 2020, 281 trainings on HIV/AIDS were held in the whole country with 5 584 participants, of which 284 trainings were held at elementary schools, gymnasiums and above-gymnasium level schools with participation of 5 382 students.**

Health and healthy lifestyle promotion programmes were delivered at summer camps for children and youth organised by PRC Regional and District Branches. **In 2020, 275 children and youth were participants in 7 community camps and training camps and 213 participated in 7 day-summer-camps.** No integration or health summer camps were organised this year.

In 2020 the PRC Headquarters coordinated the following educational programmes targeted at children and youth:

- **“Taking Care of My Health”** with a focus on healthy eating, addressed to pre-schoolers and young primary school students. The objective was to support education of children

with information campaigns and promotion of healthy eating. **59 institutions and 3 114 children took part in the programme in 2020**, including 11 preschools (367 children), 47 elementary schools (2 735 children) and one “other institution” (12 participants).

- **“Little Rescuers Help to Help”** – first aid instruction for primary school grades 1 to 4. **1 429 children in 61 institutions took part in the programme.**
- **“Super Squirrel, Ola and Kuba’s Friend”** – the programme ran in **77 institutions reaching 2 286 children.**

Another programme developed was:

**“Share your smile”. Since 2013 the Polish Red Cross is a partner of Wrigley Poland LLC in the organisation of an educational programme (previously “Protect Children’s Smiles”).**

In 2020 the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the programme had ended and the 8<sup>th</sup> began. The activities at schools were made especially difficult by the epidemiological restrictions and schools being closed. Despite that, 7<sup>th</sup> edition was successfully ended and the school activities were nearly 100% completed. The next 8<sup>th</sup> edition lasted throughout the 2020/2021 schoolyear and was implemented in a slightly limited way, i.e. teachers had to realise at least 3 of 7 lessons to consider the programme completed. In each edition, lessons on correct oral hygiene reach 100 000 elementary school students all over Poland. Additionally, all children who have participated in the programme received special kits for dental care, consisting of a toothbrush, toothpaste, and chewing gum.

The goal of the educational and preventative programme “Share Your Smile” is to teach children between ages of 5 and 13 to practice good oral hygiene, which is an important component of preventing tooth decay.

Through implementation of this programme we want to limit the number of children in Poland suffering from tooth decay, since for a number of years Poland has had one of the highest levels of tooth decay among children, in comparison with the rest of Europe.

### **Traffic ABCs – cooperation with Circle K partner**

*Traffic ABCs is a programme designed to support preschools in road traffic safety education.* The programme’s objective is to teach preschool-aged children (3-6 years old) about road traffic safety. Through the programme activities the young children will be taught useful information on safe movement on the road, as well as safe travel in the child seat, or on the bicycle or scooter, and to always remember to wear a helmet or fasten the seatbelts. Another aim of the programme is to teach children about emergency telephone numbers and introduce them to basics of first aid in an appropriate manner.

Despite the pandemic, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the programme “Traffic ABCs” was offered in nearly 100% of the preschools that declared they would participate in the programme. 23 326 children from 328 preschools participated in educational activities with Cyryl the teddy bear.

In 2020 we started preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the “Traffic ABCs”. It was uncertain whether the in-person learning would continue, so recruitment of preschools for the programme was not started. Instead, in partnership with Circle K we decided to adapt the educational materials and further develop them to make it possible to complete the programme online. With this aim in mind, plans were made for preparation of short films as well as an overhaul of the programme’s website, that will host materials to be printed and used at home or at preschool. Lesson plans for teachers will also be adapted.

**In 2020, the Society had 893 PRC Voluntary Blood Donation Clubs comprised of 23 576 PRC members (including 5 043 women) and 27 229 volunteers (including 7 487 women), who donated 89 019, 52 litres of blood** representing 18,38% of all blood from voluntary donations.

There were 2 166 members and 3 753 volunteers of other PRC units (other than clubs) who were voluntary blood donors.

Promotional activities across Poland spanned a range of initiatives, including 2 224 campaigns and events combined with blood donation drives, for instance:

- **17<sup>th</sup> edition** of the National School and University Tournament “**Young Blood Saves Lives**” in the school and academic year 2019/2020 collected 6 013, 264 litres of blood from 8 486 school students and 3 641 university students. 132 high schools and post-secondary schools as well as 8 higher education institutions of 14 voivodships participated in the programme.
- **15<sup>th</sup> edition** of edition of the programme “**Firefighters Are Voluntary Blood Donors – Fiery Rescuers – Hot Blood**” carried out in partnership with the National Headquarters of the State Fire Department and the National Board of the Society of Voluntary Fire Departments of Poland. 8 units of the State Fire Department participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the programme, as well as 69 units of the Voluntary Fire Department. In total, 833 firefighters donated blood and promoted the ideals of voluntary blood donation in 2020. The Programme ran from 2<sup>nd</sup> January until 14 December 2020 in 4 regions and collected 1 174, 450 litres of blood from firefighters and other donors encouraged by them.

30 146 Honorary Titles and Badges were issued in the performance of functions under the *Act on the Public Blood Service* concerning the issuance of Honorary Titles and Voluntary Blood Donor of Merit Badges; 1 358 duplicates of Honorary Blood Donor’s identification cards were issued.

The Voluntary Blood Donation Days take place annually in November. Voluntary blood donors of merit receive State titles, Voluntary Blood Donor of Merit for National Health Badges, PRC Honorary Badges, Cristal Hearts, Voluntary Blood Donor of Merit Badges, and other distinctions; those are various forms of expressing gratitude for their selfless gift and engagement in promotion of voluntary blood donation. Due to the state of epidemic, the ceremonies were limited to abide by the current restrictions.

In 2020, the President of Poland granted the following State honours of merit for social service of voluntary blood donation and for promotion of the Red Cross ideals:

- the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta – 1
- the Gold Cross of Merit – 29
- the Silver Cross of Merit – 20
- the Bronze Cross of Merit – 13

The Commission of the Executive Board reviewed requests for the grant of Voluntary Blood Donor of Merit for National Health badges put forward by Regional Branches and the Bureau of the National Board of Voluntary Blood Donation of the PRC. 1 072 blood donors were recognised by the Minister of Health with this special title and badge.

The Cristal Hearts Chapter reviewed 71 requests and granted Cristal Hearts to 55 voluntary blood donors of merit and other persons engaged in promotion of the voluntary blood donation ideals.

Due to the pandemic restrictions some of the traditional, nation-wide events such as the “Red Rose” Rally or the PRC Voluntary Blood Donor Car Rally in Sława were cancelled for the first time in decades.

III 1.4. Dissemination of fundamental principles and humanitarian values, the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts and knowledge about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a priority statutory activity of the Polish Red Cross. This part of our mission was pursued among others through the following projects and events:

- **Professor Remigiusz Bierzanek Contest** – In 2019, call was issued for submission of dissertations in four categories: postgraduate, bachelor, masters and doctoral theses. The results were announced in August 2020, and notice of the next edition has been published on the website and Facebook.
- **The Committee of International Humanitarian Law Promotion at the PRC National Board** held one meeting to discuss the Polish School of International Humanitarian Law in Radziejowice, the Professor Remigiusz Bierzanek Contest, and the Commission’s publication concerning humanitarian law, arranged as “answers to your questions”. The chairman of the Commission and the department employees declared they would edit the publication. Due to the pandemic and dangers presented by COVID-19, a decision was made to cancel another edition of the Polish School of International Humanitarian Law in Radziejowice; organisation of the IHL School in 2021 online was considered.
- **The Committee of Red Cross Emblem Protection** engaged in several dozen interventions at the central level and internal, organisational consultations. The Chair of the Committee delivered several lectures on the protection of the Red Cross emblem for members of the uniformed services.

- **Cross-Ministry Commission for International Humanitarian Law** – PRC representatives took part in periodical Commission meetings, reporting on fulfilment of humanitarian responsibilities. Report of Ministry of Foreign Affairs on IHL Implementation was published, for which the department developed input on behalf of the PRC. The document summarises actions of the Polish public administration, public institutions and the Polish Red Cross from 2015 to 2018, and informs of activities concerning international humanitarian law dissemination and implementation; it also discusses changes and Poland’s new national and international endeavours. A new challenge was addressed, concerning a position on autonomous weapons.
- **Lectures / training / publications** – members of the Department took part in International Humanitarian Law classes at the Department of Law of the University of Warsaw and delivered lectures during training for soldiers and officers offered by the Military Centre for Civic Education.
- **The International Humanitarian Law Library** – In 2020, the International Humanitarian Law Promotion Centre made the collection of the International Humanitarian Law Library available to teachers, university and school students in Warsaw and across Poland. The library resources were available on-site and to loan. The Library was modernised. It accepted new publications donated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Federation, and several local partners – publishers; the books were distributed as prizes in the Professor Remigiusz Bierzanek Competition. Unfortunately, the number of library users was much lower than in previous years due to the pandemic.
- **Exploring Humanitarian Law** – A request was put to the Ministry of Education to increase its subsidy for the EHL online course, in order to extend access to the course, update its content, expand promotional activities, and reach a wider audience. The request was denied and the actual grant of PLN 5 000 gross was only sufficient to organise one edition of the online course. 69 participants enrolled in the course and 38 participants passed the exam.
- **A publication** – The booklet *International humanitarian Law – we respond to your questions. Compendium for attendees of the Polish School of International Humanitarian Law* was reprinted and distributed within the PRC and to its partners. The authors of the publication are members of the Committee of International Humanitarian Law Promotion, and it was edited by Marcin Marcinko, Phd, as well as employees of the International Cooperation Department.

The Polish Red Cross operates the **National Information and Tracing Service on behalf of the government in accordance with the Geneva Conventions**. The mission of the National Information and Tracing Service is to assist victims of World War II, armed conflicts, and natural disasters. The Service carries out tracing activities on humanitarian grounds.

**From 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020** the National Information and Tracing Service received **6 218** letters from local and international senders, including letters concerning **8 174** individuals in the following matters:

- family tracing – **196**,
- issuing documents certifying war-time life stories – **1 149**,
- tracing war graves – **4 456**,
- various other matters – **2 373**,

**4 338** cases were opened,

**2 517** cases were closed,

- open tracing cases, pending final result – **1 194**,
- requests for documents – **8**,
- contacts concerning tracing of war graves and exhumations – **3 136**,
- successful tracing cases – **103**,
- unsuccessful tracing – **280**,
- positive attestations of wartime fate – **448**,
- negative attestations of wartime fate – **653**,
- identified places of burial (soldiers and civilian war victims) – **582**,
- unsuccessful tracing of war graves – **443**,
- Red Cross messages – **8**,

Local and international contacts in various other matters – **1 379**.

Other activities:

- **72** new documents concerning particular persons were registered after being obtained from national and foreign archives,
- **16 856** original documents concerning particular war victims were entered into the database,
- **14 080** documents were scanned,
- **286** beneficiaries were processed in-person,
- **106** responses to were issued to queries concerning **557** localities.

The National Information and Tracing Service pursued its statutory activities from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020, including:

- Tracing persons who went missing in the course of wars, armed conflicts, and natural disasters;
- Issuing documents certifying war-time life stories based on own archives and sourced documents;
- Tracing war graves in Poland and internationally;
- Participation in exhumations of war victims;

- Tracing of persons on humanitarian grounds at the request of close family members;
- Transmission of Red Cross messages (family messages) to and from persons in countries affected by armed conflicts;
- Processing beneficiaries and providing detailed explanations concerning tracing of family members and certification of life stories.

In 2020 the contract for the operation of the Tracing Service was signed on 5 May 2020. For over five months, the National Information and Tracing Service did not have the financial means to operate its public function. All expenses in that period were paid for by the PRC Headquarters, affecting the implementation both of planned activities of the Tracing Service and statutory activities of the Society. With the added challenges caused by SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the need to finance Tracing Service operations for such a long time caused considerable difficulties.

Due to the epidemiological situation, the Tracing Service limited in-person processing of beneficiaries, and requests for tracing or attestations were accepted through electronic and traditional mail; explanations concerning tracing of family members and certification of life stories were provided mostly over telephone or e-mail.

Once the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic reached Poland, the Tracing Service begun working to prevent loss of contact within families. In cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, graphics were created in order to educate and promote solutions for persons under epidemiological supervision, in quarantine, or for those who have relatives living alone and away from the rest of the family, or in countries affected by the pandemic more severely than Poland was. The images were presented on PRC websites and in social media, and were sent to PRC Regional Branches in order to have them disseminated among the Society's beneficiaries.

The Tracing Service worked on a rotation schedule, some days remotely and some days at the office. The decision to uphold this schedule throughout 2020 was made due to some employees of the PRC Headquarters and Tracing Service falling ill with COVID-19.

During remote work, preparations were made to respond to queries sent in and conduct tracing of missing persons. The contents of original, World War II documents from the office archive were being transferred to Excel spreadsheets.

The Tracing Service continued efforts to organise its documentation of cases from previous years and to secure documents with the use of archival tape and tacking iron. The conservation consists of carefully cleaning the paper and patching it places where it is torn or degraded; at the same time, it is ensured that the documentation is put in the correct order. Those activities are mostly applied to the general card file and the card file of soviet soldiers.

**Activities fostering humanitarian values, sensitivity to human suffering, and respect for human dignity** are a priority in the initiatives pursued by the Polish Red Cross, addressed



mostly to children and youth. Projects of this types are carried out in schools, at universities, in Social Youth Instructor Groups and through them, broadly in local communities. **In 2020, there were:**

- **1 154 school and university clubs and 25 Social Youth Instructor Groups** comprised of **18 9755 members and 9 690 volunteers,**
- **432 Squirrel Clubs** in preschools and early grades of primary schools, comprised of **13 151 members.**

Social Youth Instructor Groups, a natural training ground for future personnel of our society, were active in 12 Regional Branches. Lubelskie Regional Branch was especially active in this area.

In 2020 Lubelskie Regional Branch continued the project “Active for the 100 Years”, financed in part from the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development. Within that period the first stage of the project (in which 210 persons participated) has ended, and the second stage for another 210 persons has begun. The “Active for the 100 Years” project aims to strengthen youth engagement in voluntary activities within their local setting. It is achieved through creation of Social Youth Instructor Groups in 14 cities: Lublin, Zamość, Chełm, Łuków, Lubartowo, Tomaszów Lubelski, Kraśnik, Biłgoraj, Dęblin, Hrubieszów, Opole Lubelskie, Radzyń Podlaski, Puławy and Włodawa. Each of the PRC District Branches recruited young people between 15 and 29 years of age.

It is important to emphasise Social Youth Instructor Groups’ activity regarding organisation of local projects. In 2020, 14 such projects were carried out, i.e.: “Saint Nicholas' Day for Children with Disabilities” in Kraśnik – preparation of 20 packs for children with disabilities living in Kraśnik and accompanying informational and educational activities online; “Take Action in Green Spirit (in Defence of Earth)” – project consisting of a contest, animation, and distributing information on eco-friendly initiatives in Chełm; “Happy Pack” in Opole Lubelskie – provision of social aid for children chosen in cooperation with Municipal Social Welfare Centres, and collection of foodstuffs; “Who’s on Their Way? Better Transport for Łuków” – a project raising awareness on transport exclusion in Łuków and surrounding villages; “An Idea for Tomaszów” in Tomaszow Lubelski – organisation of an open competition to find the best idea on how to improve the town. The idea that wins will be implemented by project participants; “#STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY” in Hrubieszów – raising awareness of animal cruelty by making and publishing short clips of how animal cruelty impacts development of children and youth; “Jasiek Helps” in Radzyń Podlaski – a series of animation activities targeted at children from the local organisation Eighth Colour of the Rainbow; “Zamość Foodsharing Action” in Zamość – a collection of food in the city’s neighbourhoods and distributing the food to people in need of it; “#ItsNotASickWorld” in Biłgoraj – a project concerning diseases of affluence and condition of the environment; “Support for the Animal Shelter in Nowodwór” – activities involving collection of pet food for the local shelter; “Openness to Otherness” in Włodawa – a competition, presentation as well as making and publishing videos on tolerance in the local context; “Bridge of generations” in Lublin – preparation, printing and distribution of a festive

pamphlet for senior citizens; “Dęblin Bike Day” in Dęblin – an information campaign concerning the town’s bicycle transportation, making videos, a competition, and a bicycle ride through town; “Disability, Let’s Talk” – information campaign concerning disability and support for persons with disability.

Each year the youth and volunteers’ schedule includes projects aimed to help underprivileged children, such as “Campaign to Fight Hunger”, “Gold Rush”, “Red Cross Christmas”, “Easter with the PRC”, “School Kits for Students”, “Winter Break with the PRC”, “Dignified Childhood”, etc., as well as many unique projects carried out in individual regions and districts. In 2020, for the first time, the PRC Youth’s calendar included activities concerning mental health and climate change. Due to the pandemic restrictions many activities were carried out online.

### **Psychoeducation Workshops for the PRC Youth**

Due to the pandemic and the particular difficulties the young people could face, the PRC Headquarters organized two psychoeducation workshops for the PRC Social Youth Instructor Groups. The training covered strategies for coping with stress, emotion regulation, and activist burnout. The trainings were conducted by two psychotherapists experienced in work with volunteers. The trainings took place on two days: 26 September 2020 and 22 November 2020. In total, 20 volunteers aged 14 to 21 took part.

### **National online meeting of PRC Youth to mark the Day of PRC Youth**

The meeting took place on 18 November 2020 with participation of 14 volunteers from 7 PRC Regional Branches. The young people had the opportunity to take part a workshop concerning the Red Cross Youth Movement, meet three so-called SIM-osours (former volunteers and members of Social Youth Instructor Groups) and test their knowledge on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in a competition.

### **Psychosocial support project funded by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (1<sup>st</sup> part – 89 261, 67 CHF)**

The project was created to aid those persons who may be struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its activities covered several areas:

#### **Psychological Support Helpline**

The helpline operated in two time periods, during which the pandemic situation and the connected restrictions could lead to particular anxiety and difficulties in the psychological area (27 March until 30 June, and 29 September until 31 December).

During the first period mentioned, the helpline operated 7 days a week from 10 AM until 10 PM and we answered 181 calls from 126 women and 55 men. The helpline was used by both young and older people who needed support due to a large variety of difficulties: symptoms of anxiety and depression, interpersonal conflict, loneliness, economic problems, domestic violence and many others.

In the second period of the helpline's operation we were available 5 days a week (Monday to Friday) between 4 PM and 8 PM and we answered 92 calls from 55 women and 37 men.

Help was being offered by volunteer psychologists. Over the duration of the project a total of 18 psychologists supported us.

### **Psychoeducational materials**

In cooperation with the employed psychologists and psychotherapists, the PRC Headquarters created 3 psychoeducational pamphlets: *How to deal with stress in a crisis situation*, *How to help yourself during a crisis*, *What we should know about mental health and depression*.

The first two pamphlets were translated to foreign languages (English, Russian, and Ukrainian), in order to reach migrants and refugees in need staying in Poland. The third material was created with young people in mind, since they face considerable difficulties due to the pandemic and remote learning.

The IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support psychoeducational material targeted at young children was also translated as a part of the project.

All of the above materials were distributed through the PRC Regional Branches and NGOs supporting migrants and refugees in Warsaw.

### **Youth Movement Development Strategy for the years 2020-2025**

On 28 January 2020, the PRC Executive Board adopted *Resolution No. 518/2020* which confirmed the acceptance of Youth Movement Development Strategy for the years 2020-2025. The Strategy was created by a team consisting of an employee of the PRC Headquarters – Ewa Jakutajć, an employee of the Lubelskie Regional Branch of the PRC – Kamil Raczyński, and two representatives of the PRC Youth – Filip Rynkowski and Marta Krasińska. In order to facilitate implementation of activities outlined in the document, all of the PRC Regional Branches received the *Strategy Implementation Guide*, created by the Headquarters.

The first report concerning implementation of activities by PRC Regional Branches was conducted in June 2020 through a questionnaire.

### **100 years of the PRC Youth**

In 2020 the Promotion and Fundraising Department at the PRC Headquarters prepared a logo and graphic materials to mark the 100 years of the PRC Youth Movement. The celebrations were inaugurated on 25 October 2020 on the PRC Youth Day. The logo was unveiled and an informational material was created on the history of the youth movement and its current activities. Due to the pandemic the media event and youth meeting did not take place. A social media campaign entitled “#I'm a PRC Volunteer” was initiated. The next important day of celebrations is 8 May 2021. The celebrations will end on 25 October 2021.

### III 1.5 Strengthening the substantive, organisational, and financial capacity of the Polish Red Cross, necessary for a more effective pursuit of the statutory mission.

It is the fifth priority area designated by the National Assembly, covering four strategic goals:

- To align the organisation of the Society and the functioning of its authorities with the requirements of supporting practical activities of PRC members and volunteers;
- To secure funding for the functioning and activities of the PRC including the implementation of adopted programmes;
- To ensure effective management and development of human resources;
- To professionalise the promotional activities of the Polish Red Cross.

The main problem encountered by the Polish Red Cross is securing funds for ongoing functioning, including the obligatory member contributions to the international structures (IFRC, ICRC EU Office). The Parliamentary Group for the Polish Red Cross, formed during the VIII term of the lower house of Parliament, made a preliminary declaration it would help alleviate this problem on a systemic level. Attempts to recreate this group during the Parliament's current IX term of office have so far brought no results.

Activities were continued to bring forward an amendment to the Polish Red Cross Act.

**TEXTILES** programme was important for shaping the Polish Red Cross financial potential. Collection was conducted in all Regional Branches, which had **34 207 containers** at their disposal. In total **59 640 000 kilograms** of textiles were collected which contributed over **PLN 4 million** to the Society's activity funding. Due to the pandemic, the programme partner faced some problems which periodically disrupted the collection.

In 2020 the Polish Red Cross had 16 Regional Branches, 184 Regional Branches and 18 delegation offices. Besides the school clubs, university clubs, Social Youth Instructor Groups, "Squirrel" Clubs, Voluntary Blood Donor Clubs referred to elsewhere in this report, 194 chapters comprised of 3 724 adult members, including 2 147 women, and 2 257 volunteers, including 1 420 women.

In total, **2 261** basic units (clubs, chapters, adult and youth groups) had **46 656 PRC members in 2020**. **3 662 new members joined** and **12 687 members resigned** over the course of the year. 39 176 volunteers worked with the Society (9 690 volunteers in children and youth environments, 27 229 in the voluntary blood donor movement, and 2 257 adults other than the voluntary blood donor movement members).

According to data from reports of PRC Regional Branches, 33 of 184 District Branches did not meet the requirement of having at least 3 basic units consisting of PRC members. Of those, 7 District Branches had no basic units:

- District Branches in: Rawa Mazowiecka, Skierniewice, Żychlin (under Łódzkie Regional Branch)
- District Branch in Sokółka (under Podlaskie Regional Branch)
- District Branches in: Kartuzy, Kwidzyn, Miastko (under Pomeranian Regional Branch)  
The PRC District Branch in Płońsk provided no data.

**In 2020**, the Polish Red Cross staff included:

- 697 persons under employment agreements (including 628 women): 180 in offices of Regional Branches, 187 in offices of District Branches and delegation offices, 62 in the PRC Headquarters, 1 in the PRC training centre, 52 in care centres (managers/acting nurses), 125 PRC nurses, 71 in PRC nursing centres, and 19 in the business activity,
- 4 724 persons under short-term contracts, including 4 124 PRC nurses, 58 employees at PRC nursing centres, 22 at offices of Regional Branches, 245 at offices of District Branches and delegation offices, 9 in the PRC Headquarters, 9 in training centres, 795 in the business activity, 48 managers/acting nurses.

In 2020, the **campaign for donations of 1% of income tax was centred around the Society's pandemic activities** with the slogan: "Help us help!". We showed whom we have helped and what was done as part of support activities for those in need.

The Promotion Department prepared an outline of the campaign and graphic materials which were relayed to branches; it also prepared materials for our website as well as Instagram and Facebook fanpages. Implementing the campaign is a responsibility of Regional Branches. The PRC Headquarters does not have financial means for printing the materials and conducting an informational campaign in the media.

Various activities and programmes realising our Society's mission were conducted or coordinated on the national level. Below we list some examples.

### **Kingfisher/Castorama**

In March of 2020, the Promotion and Fundraising Department at the PRC Headquarters continued its partnership with Kingfisher, the owner of Castorama brand.

The partnership with Kingfisher is international in scope, coordinated by the British Red Cross on behalf of the Red Cross. The partnership between Kingfisher and the Red Cross Societies is centred around preparation for and response to disasters.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2020 we continued activities around the “Be safe, prepare just in case” project. It encompassed creation of a website and promotional materials including: flyers, graphic materials, and an informational campaign.

Another operation was the purchase of 400 blankets, which were then sent to the PRC Rescue Groups, and a renovation of a warehouse in Warsaw. Blankets were used as part of kits for persons living in areas at risk of flooding. Additionally 17 PRC Rescue Groups received toolboxes with equipment like rubber boots, torches, shovels, buckets, etc.

The partnership between the PRC and Kingfisher is a long-term engagement.

### **Programme “Action Donation”**

In March of 2020 the Polish Red Cross and Procter & Gamble Company started an initiative together, entitled “#ActionDonation”. The programme aims to support students who cannot buy menstrual hygiene products due to their financial situation. Students qualified for the programme received a supply of Always brand sanitary towels that will allow them to attend 100% of their school classes.

The Always #ActionDonation Programme is a response to the period poverty problem that was not recognised until a few years ago, even though it affects women around the world, including those from the most developed countries. It affects Polish women as well. According to research conducted for Procter & Gamble in 2018, nearly 1 in 6 girls in Poland has skipped school during her period due to the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products. The Kulczyk Foundation published a research report according to which one in five Polish women occasionally doesn't have sufficient funds to buy appropriate sanitary towels.

The programme was inaugurated on 29 January 2020 at the PRC offices. The programme was presented during a press conference and the sales campaign #ActionDonation was introduced, which aimed at raising the funds necessary to buy sanitary towels for the students qualified for programme. The campaign lasted from 1 February until 15 March. For each pack of Always sanitary towels bought and for each photograph shared on social media (Facebook and Instagram) with the hashtag #AkcjaDonacja, Procter & Gamble made a donation to girls of school age through the Polish Red Cross. On 10 March 2020 a meeting with female students of a Grodzisk Mazowiecki high school took place, during which the ambassador of the programme Paulina Sykut-Jeżyna was present. The meeting included a workshop for the girls, concerning self-confidence and self-esteem.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the PRC had to suspend the Always programme for two months very shortly after it began. Despite this, the programme was 100% completed by the end of June. 25 000 girls from over 500 schools in 12 voivodships received 2 000 000 sanitary towels.

Because of the success of the sales and marketing campaign, Procter and Gamble could donate additional packs for 9625 girls in 5 voivodships (Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Śląskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, and Wielkopolskie). Distribution of the packs took place in September 2020.

In total, the first edition of the #ActionDonation programme will enable distribution of 2 770 000 sanitary towels to 34 625 girls in primary schools and high schools.

During September of 2020 the second edition of the Always brand sales campaign took place. Supporting the programme was possible between 1 and 29 September. Thanks to the sales campaign, we could plan the second edition of the Always #ActionDonation programme and start recruiting elementary schools and high schools, to which supplies of sanitary towels will be donated for girls in need.

The situation that developed in Poland in the beginning of 2020 made it necessary to urgently adjust support activity priorities. The **“Together Against the Coronavirus”** activity became the main focus. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the main task of the Promotion and Fundraising Department was preparation and coordination of “Together against coronavirus” PRC support activity. Initially we prepared graphics and educational materials on how to protect oneself from the virus, and fundraising over PayU (quick, online money transfers) was also initiated.

We began to recruit partners immediately; thanks to them we raised funds for:

- Purchase of protection equipment such as masks, gloves and disinfectant. Since almost the first weeks of the pandemic the entire organisation (PRC nurses, rescuers, staff, and volunteers) were provided with protection equipment. 6 569 boxes of single-use gloves were purchased (656 900 individual gloves), as well as 15 300 litres of disinfectant, 187 750 hygienic masks, 33 000 reusable cotton masks and 5 000 FFP2-type masks.
- Purchase of equipment and additional protection measures for the PRC Rescue Groups,
- Building of 4 locations of temporary accommodation for persons ill with COVID-19 (Koszalin, Warszawa, Wrocław, and Lublin)
- Preparation of 17 219 packs for seniors, families with children, single parents, persons who are sick or kept in isolation.

Additionally we started continuous cooperation with a company producing disinfectant, 3 330 litres of which were donated to us. Further, we secured a lease of 19 cars which the PRC Regional Branches used to deliver aid. The Promotion and Fundraising Department obtained 398 pallets of chemicals, cosmetics and foodstuffs (which amounts to over 4,8 tonnes of products).

Apart from this, the Department continually obtained in-kind donations and organised the logistics; it was also responsible for purchase of protection equipment. A detailed list of donations obtained and activities completed in cooperation with partners can be found in an attachment entitled *Coronavirus – partners and sums*.

In total, Promotion and Fundraising Department at the PRC Headquarters obtained funding and in-kind donations worth PLN 12 422 615, 45.

### **“Be Safe with the PRC” campaign – project with Aviva Poland**

In 2018 we started international cooperation with Aviva Global, and as a part of it we prepared the “Be Safe with the PRC” campaign.

The main aim of the campaign is to raise societal awareness of disaster preparedness, i.e.: how to behave in case of disaster, how to increase the safety of oneself and others, how to secure one’s belongings, where to look for help, etc. As part of the project, we prepared educational materials for inhabitants of areas that are most often impacted by the effects natural disasters. The materials included: a pamphlet on how to prepare one’s own plan in case of disaster, a pamphlet on insurance prepared by Aviva, a project-dedicated ICE card and an instruction video. Those materials were shared on the project website, created in May 2020. Further resources were made available on [www.badzbezpieczny.pck.pl](http://www.badzbezpieczny.pck.pl) website: an educational video on disasters most often occurring in Poland, as well as a platform (database) <https://jestembezpieczny.pck.pl> for persons looking for their relatives, who went missing during crisis. The platform will only be activated after a crisis situation occurs, for instance a flood, in order to help individuals search for their relatives and friends.

In April of 2020 a decision was made to add pandemics to the list of disasters and hazards about which we educate the society through the “Be Safe with the PRC” project. We prepared information on how to prepare in case of a pandemic, how to protect oneself and keep distance in public places. We prepared a hand-washing instruction.

In April of 2020 a decision was made to start an educational campaign informing of how to prepare for a crisis situation. The media campaign lasted for a month and a half (billboards, “citylights”, video advertisements on the subway and in train stations, national and local press, internet, and social media).

To secure the local population, 250 synthetic fleece blankets with PRC logo were purchased and given to the PRC Rescue Groups operating in areas endangered by flooding (voivodships: Małopolskie, Świętokrzyskie, Mazowieckie, Dolnośląskie, Śląskie, and Opolskie); the blankets are also stored in the main PRC warehouse, from where they will be distributed directly to places affected by disasters.

Regional and District PRC Branches received a set of materials: informational pamphlets on 3 steps to be taken in case a crisis situation occurs, and a special ICE card, which they could then distribute to local inhabitants.

Other activities of the Promotion and Fundraising Department:

- Continuous communication activities conducted by the promotion department as part of other departments’ projects. The promotion department is responsible for relaying



information to the media and cooperating with media organisations, creating information for the website, cultivating relations with journalists.

- Monitoring local and national press.
- Preparing and publishing PR materials for campaigns. Production of promotional materials and gadgets.
- Cooperation with businesses – searching for partners.
- Google Adwords – updating key words within a grant obtained from Google. The grant allows for promotion of the website in the Google search engine, with the use of key words.
- Managing the PRC profiles on Facebook and Instagram.

## III 2. International cooperation

### ***I. Organisational matters:***

- Upon request from international structures topical surveys were completed; information was provided as input for information and good practices exchange, related to COVID-19 operations, between the Movement components.
- Information was given over telephone and e-mail concerning actions of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement components, as well as the possibility of work on missions abroad, which are questions often posed by both individuals and the media in relation to, among others, current and planned actions to mitigate the pandemic crisis.
- A range of materials concerning activities of the PRC and the Movement as a whole was prepared and published on the website [www.pck.pl](http://www.pck.pl) and in Federation newsletters, which ensured promotion of the PRC both nationally and internationally.
- A range of informational and operational materials was prepared for the Director and the Executive Board, including: lists of matters the Department is working on, information on the structure of the Red Cross Movement and competences of its individual components, international contributions, statute matters.
- Both substantive and financial accounts of the Department's endeavours were prepared.
- Talks were held concerning contributions to the Federation and Red Cross Office in Brussels, representing the position of the Executive Board and the Director General.

### ***II. Disasters***

- Informational activities were being performed, in cooperation with the Promotion Department, concerning international appeals focused on victims of conflicts and natural disasters – activity "Help for Australia". Thanks to partners and all individuals who made contributions to the aid fund for Australia, the PRC supported the Australian community. Funds gathered were transferred to the Australian Red Cross. The activity ended in March 2020.

- Magdalena Stefańska, the Head of International Cooperation Department, participated in two international meetings which were a part of High Level Coordination trainings within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism,
- The Department, in cooperation with other Headquarters Departments, initiated COVID-19 operations. It prepared a draft of psychosocial support projects, which were granted external funding from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Magdalena Stefańska was one of the coordinators of the project, being responsible for arrangements regarding conditions and scope of tasks being performed, as well as substantive reporting. The project goal was to set up a psychological support line and train PRC staff in providing psychological support to children. An application was also prepared to divert some funds to migrant and refugee support in cooperation with the Warsaw Multicultural Centre.
- The Department represented the PRC during trainings, webinars, international meetings on the topics of, among others: COVID-19 (support of the vaccination programme, crisis management, communication in crisis), humanitarian diplomacy, civil protection during the pandemic, strengthening the role of women within the RC/RC Movement, and model law concerning protection of the red cross emblem.
- Contact was established with the Croatian Red Cross in order to cooperate on a project financed by the Warsaw Marshall's Office, regarding provision of aid to victims of the earthquake. An agreement on cooperation was concluded, rules and a timetable for the organisation of the project were established. Magdalena Stefańska participated in the Convent of Poland's Voivodship Marshalls to present the possibilities for international cooperation.
- Each month, PRC activities regarding the COVID -19 operations were reported on a special Federation "GO" platform, and once per quarter information on the funding of those activities was sent, along with a measurement of the operations' effectiveness.

### ***III. Cooperation with individual components of the RC Movement and external partners.***

- Continuous contact and participation was maintained in the work of European Legal Supporters Group. In 2020, the group's work was dedicated to implementation of humanitarian resolutions adopted during the Movement's latest statute sessions. In 2020 the meetings were held online.
- Contact was maintained with the partnered National Societies within the Anti-Trafficking network, devoted to the problem of human trafficking.
- The declaration of joining an agreement on partnership with components of the Movement acting in Belarus was implemented. The agreement is valid until 31.12.2021. A webinar was held for the Belarus Red Cross, concerning promotion of international humanitarian law of armed conflicts. Magdalena Stefańska participated in meeting organised by the Commissioner for Human Rights to declare the PRC would provide psychosocial support for persecuted persons arriving in Poland from Belarus. This activity

is realised in cooperation with the Warsaw Multicultural Centre that supports around 40 Belarussians.

- On 8 November 2019, a general cooperation agreement was concluded with the Main School of Fire Service. It covers joined activities in areas of rescue, search and education. The School has shown great interest in the School of International Humanitarian Law, the Contest of Dissertations, operations of the IHL Library, and protection of the red cross emblem. In 2020, working contacts were established as a result of which a cooperative dissertation on humanitarian aid and crisis management during a natural disaster was prepared and submitted for publication.
- The EDU Africa Foundation's initiative was continued by connecting it to the Red Cross in Benin. The cooperation covers educational activities for children attending community day rooms in three villages in Togo and Benin. Just like the year before, packages with gifts and aid for 100 children were delivered.
- A publication – The booklet *International Humanitarian Law – we respond to your questions. Compendium for attendees of the Polish School of International Humanitarian Law* was reprinted and distributed within the PRC and to its partners. The authors of the publication are members of the Committee of International Humanitarian Law Promotion, and it was edited by Marcin Marcinko, PhD, as well as employees of the International Cooperation Department.

#### **IV. Cooperation with PRC Regional Boards:**

- The IHL Centre engages the Regional Branches in the Professor Remigiusz Bierzanek Contest, which serves as a promotional activity for the entire National Society. A few students remain in contact with the Centre in order to consult the substance of the bachelor's and master's theses.
- PRC Regional Branches were involved in the implementation of "Discovering Humanitarian Law" programme in secondary and above-secondary schools.
- The Committee of Red Cross Emblem Protection supported the Regional Branches in interventions concerning infringement of the emblem and consulted the graphic projects of logotypes.

#### **V. Translations:**

The Department provided English-to-Polish and Polish-to-English translations of documentation, including incoming and outgoing correspondence, reports, promotional and programmatic materials.

PRC Regional Branches have also been involved in international cooperation. Activities of Lubelskie Regional Branch in this area are especially worthy of recognition. In 2020, the Branch continued the "Crisis and Disaster Management Cooperation Program Between the Polish Red Cross Lubelskie District and The American Red Cross of Massachusetts", which receives

funding from the United States Embassy in Warsaw. Polish versions of United States' programmes were prepared (the "Pillowcase Project" and the "Home Fire Campaign"). Translated publications were analysed to determine if changes needed to be made and whether the contents had to be modified. The translated publications were consulted. Ms. Anna Nowak-Kowal was chosen to perform the substantive consultation of the Pillowcase project and Home Fire Campaign, since she has experience in creating educational publications for schools. Among others, she is the co-author of Education for Security handbook for high schools.

On 4 February a webinar was held by the American Red Cross concerning cooperation on our project and their visit in Poland. On 5 May, due to schools being closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the PRC Lubelskie Branch requested an extension of the project. Extension until the end of 2020 was granted.

In November and December a pilot project was started. A few hundred publications were prepared and printed, a book of exercises and method guide for teachers. The Pillowcase Project was translated as Project Safe Pillowcase (pol. *Projekt Bezpieczna Poszewka*). The students' parents collected the publications from school. Lessons were held for each class on the Teams platform. The pilot programme was realised at the Primary Schools No. 21 and No. 18 in Lublin. Evaluation is planned for 2021, as well as publishing of another several series of Project Safe Pillowcase educational materials.

#### **Supreme authorities of the Polish Red Cross:**

- The PRC National Congress was held once:
  - Extraordinary Congress in February – adopted a resolution introducing changes in the rules of election of PRC authorities, most of which were later annulled by the PRC Organisational Court.
  - Election and reporting Congress – was planned for June 2020, but was cancelled but due to the pandemic restrictions.
- Executive Board of the PRC held 2 sessions in 2020, including one lasting over the course of two days. It adopted 101 resolutions both during sessions and by circulation. Due to the pandemic restrictions, the Board worked remotely from March onwards.
- The Bureau of the PRC Executive Board met before Board meetings to issue opinions on documents tabled to the Board. The Bureau passed 4 resolutions. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Bureau worked remotely.

The PRC Honorary Badge Committee held one meeting of the. 600 Honorary PRC Badges were issued, including:

- 48 first grade badges,
- 77 second grade badges,
- 114 third grade badges,
- 361 fourth grade badges.

The PRC Audit Committee held 3 sessions and 1 meeting with representatives of PRC regional audit boards. A training and informational meeting was organised in March, another one of this kind in the current term of the Committee. It confirmed the need of the members of controlling bodies to maintain contact in order to exchange experience gained in their work.

## VI. Inspections

In 2020 95 inspections were held in total, 5 of them remotely. 75 inspections gave positive outcomes. During 14 inspections irregularities were reported; in 4 inspections no irregularities were reported but some post-inspection recommendations were issued. Two inspections, at the PRC Dolnośląskie Regional Branch (conducted by the Revenue Service Wrocław-Śródmieście) and in PRC District branch in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (conducted by National Support Centre for Agriculture in Warsaw) were not finished.

Three inspections were held at PRC Małopolskie Regional Branch, the inspecting institutions did not provide protocols (Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Nowy Sącz and two inspections by the Municipal and Communal Social Welfare Centre in Wieliczka).

## V. Implementation of findings of the National Audit Board.

The National Audit Board presented no findings in 2020.

## VI. Summary

In 2020, the Polish Red Cross continued to pursue the activities defined in the *PRC Strategy 2016-2020*, approved in a resolution of the National Congress in 2016, focusing mainly on statutory activities including welfare aid and home-based care for the sick, promotion of health and healthy lifestyles, including voluntary blood donation, rescue operations and first aid. Further important areas of statutory activities were: promotion of the fundamental principles and humanitarian values, the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts, fostering tolerance and respect for human dignity.

Most programmes and various activities carried out in 2020 by the Polish Red Cross involved promotion of health and healthy lifestyle, especially among children and youth. The Society also had a strong focus on providing support to the economically disadvantaged groups, seniors, persons living with illnesses and disability, and those at risk of social exclusion.

Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic was a surprise to all inhabitants of Poland. It had a direct impact on Polish Red Cross activities on all organisational levels. During the pandemic, the Society had to pay attention not only to its beneficiaries, but also to the safety of its staff and volunteers engaged in providing of care and support.

Activities involving care is one of the priorities of the Society's day-to-day work, and the Regional and District Branches put a lot of effort into obtaining contracts in this area. The decline of the number of care centres was significantly limited – only 1 care centre was lost,

while the number of contracts with local governments grew by 3, and the number of PRC beneficiaries using neighbourhood help declined from 164 in 2019 to 26 in 2020.

Voluntary blood donors who are members of PRC Voluntary Blood Donor Clubs represent a large group of members and volunteers of our Society. Regional and District Branches not only participate in national campaigns which promote voluntary blood donation, but also carry out their own projects in this area.

Despite the declining number of basic units (from 3 177 in 2019 to 2 261 in 2020), and members (69 700 to 46 656 respectively), the Society still has a large number of members, especially among children and youth and in voluntary blood donation movement.

Still, the Society's structure-related problems remain unsolved. Districts which do not fulfil the statutory requirement are still recognised. In 2020, 33 out of 184 District Branches did not meet the requirement of having at least 3 basic units consisting of adult PRC members. According to statistics provided by regional Branches, 7 District Branches had no basic units whatsoever:

- District Branches in: Rawa Mazowiecka, Skierniewice, Żychlin (under Łódzki Regional Branch)
- District Branch in Sokółka (under Podlaski Regional Branch)
- District Branches in: Kartuzy, Kwidzyn, Miastko (under Pomorski Regional Branch)
- The PRC District Branch in Płońsk provided no data.

Regional and District Branches of the PRC are applying for funds from various sources more often, including EU grants, preparing their own interesting projects, or entering into partnerships.

The above report presents activities carried out by the Society in 2020. However, for obvious reasons, it cannot include all the initiatives undertaken by our units across Poland on a daily basis. The details of activities taken by the different branches are presented in their reports, used as input for this document.

Prepared by

the Organisation Department

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