

1. ASIA

Afghanistan: Malteser Germany Work on the Future for Afghanistan

In view of the tense situation in Afghanistan, Malteser Germany have run a security meeting for all expatriate staff working in Afghanistan. "We have realized that the clear differentiation between military operations and humanitarian assistance is more important than ever. Since the international security forces in Afghanistan often use the same types of vehicles as relief organisations, overland drives into our project areas become more dangerous for our staff," Roland Hansen, Head of Asia Desk, explains the difficulties.

Malteser Germany are convinced that it would be a disaster for the Afghan population and the process of democratisation if the security situation did not continue to stabilise and even more relief organisations left the country. "We have to go on with the reconstruction of schools and health centres. At present, we are at full stretch preparing all buildings for the cold and rough winter season. Otherwise, the weather will destroy our work of the last months." In addition, the training of the local staff is a particular concern for Hansen: "The knowledge we impart to our local staff is the basis for the future of their country."

Hansen also attaches great importance to the community stabilization and co-existence programmes for the Afghan population: Many of the millions of returnees who have lived in Pakistan or Iran for years now have to face refusal and disapproval when coming back to their home villages. The property situation of houses and land is often unclarified. Malteser Germany here focus on the cooperation with the older members of the villages and plan and develop together projects which promote the integration of returnees and their co-existence with the population as well as the adjustment of conflicts between the villages. As Hansen emphasizes, the elaboration of a "Strategy for Afghanistan" had also been a topic of the security workshop: the development of a longer-term relief programme until the year 2010 based on the four pillars health, reconciliation and co-existence, training and income generating measures.

Further information: Roland Hansen, Roland.Hansen@malteser-ald.de

Afghanistan: Successful Realisation of New Regulations

In the beginning of September, Dr. Oliver Heidinger, police doctor in the Northrhine-Westphalian Ministry of Interior, visited our Malteser German Medical Team in Kabul. As the responsible doctor, Heidinger had been significantly involved in the development of the regulations for the physical examinations of new Afghan police recruits. In Kabul he could now see for himself that these regulations had been successfully realized. Heidinger was confident and emphasized that probably in a few years the project could be handed over to Afghan responsibility. Already today, the Afghan doctors run the physicals on their own. German Malteser staff care for the medical and specialist supervision.

For further information: Rainer Kobe, rainer.kobe@malteser-ald.de

2. AFRICA

Sudan: Nationwide Immunisation Campaign Against Polio

From 10 to 12 October, our Malteser team in Darfur carried out a comprehensive immunisation campaign against polio in the Sudanese town of Tabit and in 26 surrounding villages. This campaign was not only part of a nationwide operation but also of the continent's largest immunisation campaign in history which took place at the same time also in 22 other West and Central African countries aiming to immunise 80 million children against polio. "It is really high time to take some action against this illness", Malteser emergency aid coordinator Birke Herzbruch reports. "Since April 2001, Sudan has been free of polio; now, eleven new cases of polio have been registered." Herzbruch is convinced that the conflict in



Darfur with its cross-border movements and the foiling of immunisation campaigns is one of the main reasons for the reintroduction of the virus.

2,627 children under five years have been immunised against polio in these three days; further 2.422 children have been given vitamin A. Seven teams had been formed out of the local health workers. Since it would have become difficult to reach all the children who had fled out of their villages or who in the early morning accompanied their mothers to work on the fields, the Malteser team already in the week before had visited the whole region and announced the immunisation campaign over loudspeakers.

The vaccine was provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and by UNICEF. Further immunisation campaigns are planned for November 2004 and the beginning of 2005.

Further information: Marion Zeus, Marion.Zeus@malteser-ald.de

DR Congo: “Water for Ariwara” Letter of Congratulations of the United Nations

An official letter of congratulations signed by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, executive director of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) has reached the Foreign Aid Department: “...for the success of your anniversary project “Water for Ariwara” I would like to congratulate you and express my admiration for the engagement of the numerous volunteers...With 325 (update: 351) bordered sources you have done an exemplary job which provides clean water and basic health care for the inhabitants of this region. Please convey my best regards and wishes to all Malteser groups who have supported this project for their admirable commitment...”

Further information: Petra Ipp, Petra.Ipp@malteser-ald.de



3. EUROPE

Central and East European (CEE) Consulting Process: Evaluation in Romania

The present situation of SAMR (Serviciul de Ajutor în România), the Romanian Malteser Relief Service, was the focus of a one-week evaluation at the beginning of October in several local branches in Romania. Zsuzsa Barla, SAMR's secretary general, the German Malteser coordinator for Romania Friedhelm Koch, the Order of Malta's ambassador for Romania, Franz Alfred Count of Hartig, Michael Lülsdorff, head of the Foreign Aid Department's CEE desk, and Axel Dechamps, an external organizational consultant, participated in this journey.

The evaluation took place in the framework of the „CEE Consulting Process“ which had been started in 2003 and which the leaderships of the CEE Malteser organisations and their German partners had agreed upon on the occasion of their common conference last year. Facing the fact that only few donations are still available for development assistance to East European partner organisations, sustainable self-financing will become one of the priorities for them. The consulting process is aiming towards an adequate preparation of the partners.

Further information: Michael.Luelsdorff@malteser-ald.de

Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder Visits Malteser Relief Service in Hungary: Deep Gratitude for Malteser Engagement in Budapest 15 Years Ago

Within his two-day visit to Hungary in September, the Federal Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder, also visited the head office of the Hungarian Malteser Relief Service in Budapest. On the occasion of the dramatic mass escape of almost 150,000 East Germans from the former German Democratic Republic to the west 15 years ago, Hungarian and German Malteser teams had played a key role. “You and your helpers – among them also Baroness von Boeselager and many other Malteser volunteers from Germany – with courage and active help have given an important contribution to overcome the painful division of Europe 15 years ago,” Schröder said during his meeting with Monsignore Imre Kozma who at that time had been the head of the Hungarian Malteser Relief Service who had organized



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Editorial office: Ingo Radtke, Petra Ipp * Phone + 49 – 2 21 – 98 22 155 * Fax + 49 – 2 21 – 98 22 179

E-Mail: petra.ipp@malteser-ald.de

the care for the refugees.

“In the name of all Malteser volunteers from Germany I would like to express my gratitude to the Federal Chancellor for this appreciation of our commitment in Budapest,” explained Dr. Constantin von Brandenstein-Zeppelin, the President of Malteser Germany, in Cologne. “This is an important signal for the fortification of our voluntary helpers and their honorary commitment.” Brandenstein described this Malteser operation in Budapest in 1989 as the “most important political Malteser contribution since the rescue of the Mediterranean Sea in 1565 for the Christian occident by the means of the defence of Malta.”

In the summer of 1989, Hungarian and German Malteser teams had built up a tent camp for about 50.000 East German refugees on the grounds of the parish “Holy Family” in the Budapest district of Zugliget. On 11 September 1989, Hungary had opened its border with Austria allowing almost 150,000 East German to flee to the west.

For further information: Michael Lülsdorff, Michael.Luelsdorff@malteser-ald.de

4. OTHER

Haiti: ECOM Puts 50.000 Euro at the Disposal of the Dominican Association

On 17 and 18 September, the tropical storm Jeanne had brought disastrous floods to Haiti which had affected about 300,000 people. The international community had reacted with distributions of food and water and the provision of immediate medical attention in spite of a very complex security situation. Since the early beginning, ECOM had tried to get in contact with the National Association of the Order of Malta in the Dominican Republic and had offered to support the relief measures of the Dominican Association for the numerous victims. For this purpose, ECOM has put 50,000 Euro at the disposal of the Dominican Association. As the Ambassador of the Order of Malta for Haiti informed us, there are on the one hand still significant needs even if UN peacekeepers by the means of military vehicles and helicopters could already bring important assistance to the people in need. On the other hand, he strongly recommends first to observe the further development in the country before starting a relief programme. In the end of September, severe political unrest in the Haitian capital had left 14 people dead. As the political situation in the poorest country in the Americas remains fragile ahead of general elections scheduled for 2005, ECOM will therefore for the time being follow the recommendation of Ambassador Rothe.

Further information: Ingo Radtke, ingo.radtke@malteser-ald.de

Ingo Radtke

Petra Ipp, Heike Otto

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