

Annual report 2015



Belgian
Red Cross
Flanders

helps
people help



Dear Reader

In 2015, we launched our new baseline, 'Helpt helpen' ('Helps people help'). We have proven that these are not empty words. Over the past year, we have clearly demonstrated that we play a vital role in our society. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders really does help people to help one another.

Even if it all looks effortless, our work is no walk in the park. Countless people needed help in 2015, and some of the challenges we faced were enormous. But thanks to our volunteers and the support of thousands of people throughout Flanders, we proved equal to the task. That is encouraging.

Do you know how many ways Belgian Red Cross-Flanders helps people? No other organization has such a broad scope of action or offers assistance to so many people in need. None of our work would be possible without our 13,815 volunteers, who are always ready to lend a helping hand. Neither would we get very far without our thousands of generous financial donors, or the tens of thousands of people who donate their blood, plasma and platelets. We cannot thank them enough for their support and dedication.

We are also strengthening our focus on self-reliance. Every year, we teach thousands of people of all ages across Flanders the skills they need to administer first aid. Through the wide range of courses and introductory sessions we offer, more and more people know how to assist others if something goes wrong. That is another facet of what 'helps people help' means.

Though we are a non-profit organization, we set great store by efficiency and good governance. We take a professional, quality-based and reasoned approach to everything we do. Every five years, we draw up a strategic plan examining how best to continue fulfilling our role in a changing society. This enables us to act quickly and provide effective assistance whenever necessary.

For instance, in 2015 we needed all hands on deck to tackle the refugee crisis. We had to raise our reception capacity from 1,500 to 5,664 places in record time, yet we managed to pull it off without a hitch.

We look to the future with great confidence. Thanks to our sustainable new building, Sango, we are in a strong position to keep Flanders supplied with blood. Sango is also home to our Library Service with thousands of books, CDs and DVDs for care homes and hospitals.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helps us to help.



Prof. Dr. Philippe Vandekerckhove
Chief Executive Officer



Christ'l Joris
President

Contents



- Events in 2015.....5
- Organization 23
- Financial report 33



Rode Kruis
Vlaanderen

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Rode Kruis
Vlaanderen

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Rode Kruis
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January 5

Who are you helping with your blood?

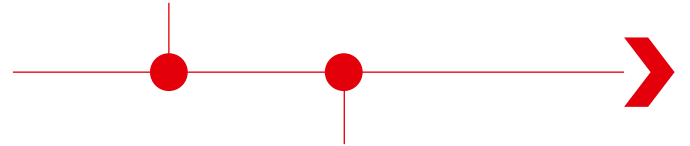
Every one of us can save a life, but a lot of people do not realize that. Our campaign 'Who are you helping?' sought to address this, based on the fact that it is your blood group that determines who you can help by donating blood.

Many people do not know what their blood group is. We hope to convince more people to give blood by talking about their blood groups and telling them who they could help by donating. From now on, you can check our website each day to see whether we have sufficient stocks for your blood group. You can also find out the best way to help. If your blood group is O-, then you can donate blood to anyone. If your blood group is AB+, then you would be a perfect plasma donor.

Our campaign set out to remind people that blood is always essential, especially when stocks are low for their blood group.



Events in 2015



February 7

A new look

Our Relief Service volunteers are ready to provide help at any time of the day or night. They brave the wind and weather all year round to provide relief in emergencies, staff first aid-posts at events and handle urgent and non-urgent patient transportation.

2015 saw us launch a brand-new range of intervention clothing for our Relief Service volunteers, who number over 6,000. The new intervention clothing is fresh, contemporary and, most importantly, highly functional. We opted for high-quality materials that have already proven their suitability for security services, police forces and medical staff.

We decided to make red the main color, adding in yellow accents to ensure optimum visibility, as per federal government recommendations. Moreover, the new outfits offer our first-aiders extra protection from rain.



February 28

Volunteer Week

Volunteer Week ran from February 28 to March 8. We at Belgian Red Cross-Flanders could not let it go by unmarked. With some 13,815 volunteers, we are one of Flanders' biggest volunteer organizations. We are the oldest too, celebrating our 151st birthday in 2015.



Our volunteers contribute to making Flanders a caring place where people help one another. And they do that in so many different ways: giving first aid at festivals, teaching others how to administer first aid, ensuring that underprivileged children and disabled people can enjoy unforgettable vacations, transporting patients, distributing books in hospitals, offering support to reception centers for asylum seekers, and many other ways besides.

Volunteer Week is the perfect opportunity for us to express our heartfelt appreciation for all our volunteers.



February

Just like in real life

Practical exercises are a key component of our first-aid courses. We want to make them as realistic as possible for our trainees, so we need volunteers to act as 'accident victims' in simulations of situations where first aid would be required.

"I've been with the Relief Service for a very long time and I've ridden in the ambulance, so I have a unique insight into how people react in certain situations. After a simulation exercise, it's nice to get compliments from trainees who think you behaved very realistically!"
Andy, simulation volunteer.

In February 2015, we ran a two-day training course for the instructors who will train simulation volunteers. The course lasted a total of 14 hours.



March

'Bloody Serious' students

Every year, students in six college towns set out to persuade their fellow students to come and donate blood or plasma. And it certainly pays off! In the 2014-2015 academic year, students accounted for 17,098 donations: 920 plasma donations and 16,178 blood donations.



Our 'Bloody Serious' campaign is designed to add younger donors to our database. Our donor centers in Leuven, Ghent and Kortrijk have seen the biggest rises in the number of young donors thanks to the efforts of our student campaigners. That bodes well for the future.

March 12

Helps people help

We help people help each other, but it is no easy task to be ready to provide assistance whenever and wherever it is required. On March 12, we launched our new baseline and our new positioning.

"We want people to understand that we are one of the only organizations capable of helping the people of Flanders to help one another", said CEO Prof. Dr. Philippe Vandekerckhove. "If you take us out of the picture, then people who want to help others will not be able to do so. Our new baseline, 'Belgian Red Cross-Flanders helps people help', really brings that idea home."

This baseline gets to the center of what the Red Cross is and what we do. We help people who want to help others but do not know how, where, when or whom they can help. We ensure that assistance is provided in an efficient and professional manner.

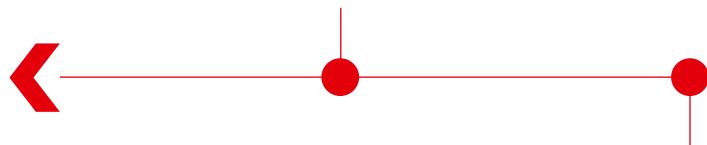
As well as adopting a new baseline, we also brought in a new logo, redesigned our website and totally revamped our image in a bid to create a stronger, more unified profil.

April 23

Flanders buys stickers

Our volunteers launched another large-scale sticker sale throughout Flanders on April 23. All the proceeds went to local Red Cross branches, where they were put towards purchasing first-aid materials, a new book cart for the Zorgbib library, and similar. By buying a sticker, you are investing in your community and helping people in your local area, including yourself – who knows, you may well need assistance yourself some day!

Once again, our sticker sale was a resounding success. We sold 565,000 stickers, raising a total of €2,825,000. With this money, Flanders ensures that our local branches can help countless people over the next year.



April 25

Earthquake in Nepal

On April 25, 5.6 million people were caught up in the deadliest earthquake in Nepal's history. Its consequences were devastating: 8,856 people were killed, while 602,257 homes were destroyed and 285,099 were severely damaged.

We collected over €1 million in donations in Belgium. We immediately earmarked a share of that sum for emergency relief, including shelter kits. The rest of the money was put towards reconstruction, with the Nepal Red Cross, the government and other aid organizations determining which measures should be given the highest priority.

We are helping over 700,000 people through our efforts to provide clean water and improved sanitation, rebuild homes, repair healthcare infrastructure and restore means of subsistence.



May 9

Thank-you party

True to tradition, on May 9 and 10, 2015 we held a celebration honoring our volunteers and our loyal blood donors. We thanked them for their hard work and unwavering enthusiasm with a big Red Cross party at the Plopsaland theme park.

16,838 donors, volunteers and their family members enjoyed a well-deserved day out at Plopsaland, checking out the attractions at the brand-new Plopsaqua water park and going on a fun treasure hunt along the beach.



May 14

Giant traffic jam

On May 14, road works on the E313 between Ranst and Antwerp caused a massive traffic jam. All the traffic was directed into a single lane, leaving drivers stuck in lines for two hours or more. And since it was especially hot that day, lots of people took sick in their cars. Some of them contacted the emergency services, who decided to deploy the Medical Intervention Plan.

The 112 emergency call center dispatched one of our Rapid Response Teams to the scene. Our first-aiders headed to the E34-E313 intersection, where we handed out water with the civil protection services. We also set up a first-aid post to treat people who felt unwell. Some drivers had to be taken out of the line.

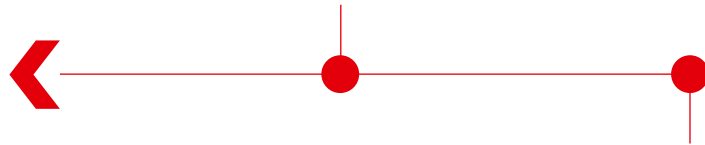
May 27

Power loss at Zaventem

A power outage in the air traffic control center at Brussels Airport caused major problems on May 27. Belgian airspace was closed for several hours, causing around 200 flights to be cancelled and many more to be diverted. Hundreds of stranded travelers were forced to spend the night in the airport.

Brussels Airport asked us to quickly provide beds, blankets and hygiene kits for them. Thanks to the efforts of our logistics team, we were able to supply the necessary equipment three days in a row. We delivered the first camp beds as early as 5.00 p.m. on the first day. Volunteers worked into the night to bring 315 camp beds, 400 blankets and 308 hygiene kits to the airport.

Their hard work allowed around 500 passengers of various nationalities to spend the night comfortably in the departure lounge and the transit area.



May

25 years of receiving asylum seekers

Did you know that we have been managing asylum seeker reception in Belgium for 25 years? Or that our guardians have been assisting unaccompanied refugee minors for ten years?

We organized a unique exhibition to tell the story of our work over the past 25 years and explain how we go about providing high-quality reception services today. With a mix of facts, figures and personal accounts by people who have lived with us over the past quarter-century, the exhibition illustrated the ever-changing approach to asylum seeker reception.

The exhibition toured Flanders, visiting various towns and cities throughout 2015.



June 4

Sango opens its doors

Our new lab building, Sango, was officially opened in Mechelen on June 4. The opening was attended by Prime Minister Charles Michel, Federal Minister for Public Health Maggie De Block, Flemish Minister for Welfare Jo Vandeuren and Mayor of Mechelen Bart Somers.

Sango – Esperanto for ‘blood’ – is the beating heart of blood supply services in Flanders. It is a centralized facility for all of our activities linked to processing blood products in the Antwerp, Flemish Brabant and Limburg region: here we can test blood, split up whole blood and prepare blood products for transport. People can also come to Sango to donate blood, plasma and platelets. Moreover, Sango is home to the Zorgbib library, a repository of thousands of library resources ready for distribution to hospitals and care homes.

The Sango building is a paragon of economically and environmentally responsible construction: to give just one example, the building generates 95% of the energy it needs.



June 28

Bus crash in Middelkerke

On June 28, there was a serious accident on the E40 near Middelkerke. A bus taking 34 British schoolchildren to Phantasialand crashed a bridge support. The bus driver was killed, while many children were injured.

Ambulances and vehicles carrying equipment and emergency responders rushed to the scene to provide emergency medical treatment. Our Social Intervention Service (SIS) volunteers set up a reception center in a nearby hall for those who had escaped unhurt.



An SIS volunteer who was there that day said: *“I was pretty shocked when I arrived: the children and their teachers were covered in bruises and spattered with blood. But when one of the children comes up to you as they’re about to leave and says ‘I just wanted to say thank you for everything’, you know why you volunteer with the Red Cross.”*

June 14

Grateful for blood

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on June 14. We mark it by sending each of our donors a thank-you message from a grateful patient. Four patients told us their moving stories – their thankfulness towards blood donors shines through with every word they say.

"I was given ten liters of blood in hospital. To me, it's like ten liters of goodness fell from the sky. Thanks to that blood, I'm still alive!"
Alex Cosemans, whose life was saved by blood.



Curious donors and volunteers were given the chance to take a peek behind the scenes of Sango, our new building in Mechelen, on the Welcome Day on June 13. As they visited, they followed blood's journey from the donor to the bag of blood, plasma or platelets that goes out to the hospital. Around 330 visitors came for a look around, while 120 people donated blood, plasma or platelets.



July

A quick prick in the finger, just to make sure

For your own safety, you should not give blood if your hemoglobin level is too low. Hemoglobin is an iron-containing protein in your red blood cells and carries oxygen from your lungs to your cells.

We decided to start carrying out finger-prick tests to avoid taking blood from donors at a bad time. In practice, this means that we take a small blood sample from new donors and donors whose hemoglobin level was too low at their last donation. We then check the hemoglobin concentration in the sample, and the doctor immediately decides whether the donor can give blood that day or not.

We have taken around 10,000 measurements since introducing the test. Analysis shows that donor safety among new donors has increased by some 3%, with 97.6% of donors coming in above the legal threshold for blood donation.

July

Tragedy at summer camp

Each year, thousands of young people across Flanders attend summer camp in Belgium and abroad. It is a truly unforgettable experience for them. Sadly, they are sometimes confronted with tragic accidents at camp too.

We help youth and vacation organizations through the difficult days that follow an incident. We offer support to young camp attendees and camp counselors in the aftermath of a disaster. We notify those affected and their families about the incident and explain what happens next. In summer 2015, we helped six youth organizations to cope with twelve incidents.

Our approach centers on equipping organizations to deal with tragedies. By offering courses and advice on drafting emergency plans, we hope to boost self-reliance among organizations and the young people involved in them. If necessary, we also provide psychosocial counseling.



August

Wash your hands more often!

Do children wash their hands more if they understand how important it is, or if they are rewarded for doing so? That may seem like a stupid question, but the answer may save lives. Our Center for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP) is looking into the best way of promoting WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) programs.

In partnership with the Centre for Evidence-Based Health Care at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, CEBaP is carrying out a scientific literature review focusing on the effectiveness of efforts to promote sanitation and hand-washing in developing countries.

We will publish a report in early 2017. WASH experts from development organizations, government bodies and universities will be able to use the report to draw up practical recommendations and policy advice for developing countries and international bodies.

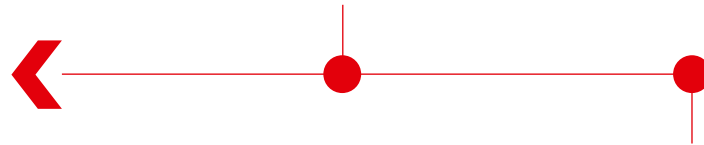


August

A vacation to remember

In July and August, we run vacation camps for socially vulnerable children. That way, they can go back to school full of stories about their fantastic vacation – just like all the other children. While they are at camp, all the children receive the personal, positive attention they deserve. We provide free transportation, spare clothes, healthy meals, and so forth.

In summer 2015, 467 children and 220 volunteers had the time of their lives running around and playing at our camps. They went home with some great memories.



August 29

Festivalitis

There was a whole lot going on in Flanders in 2015's summer. There were festivals, sports events, markets, and lots of other fun things going on everywhere. But whenever there are lots of people, there is also a greater risk of accidents. Luckily our volunteers are always there to offer a helping hand.

Once the summer was over, we took a look at the figures: we sent 18,000 volunteers, 7,303 stretchers and 3,500 first-aid kits to 1,700 events over the summer. June 27 was the busiest day of all, with a staggering 111 events! All in all, we treated 33,000 people.



September

People seeking refuge

Over the summer, Belgium, too, was faced with a sudden influx of refugees. We helped the government to respond to the needs of the thousands of men, women and children who came to seek refuge here.

On August 28, the government decided to set up emergency reception facilities for 400 asylum seekers at the Sijsele military site. Working in partnership with a logistical team from Doctors Without Borders, we converted the empty sheds on the site into an emergency camp in under a week.

On September 3, a team of volunteers opened the camp, under the supervision of the center manager. They provided logistical support,

medical treatment, reception services and assistance for the asylum seekers who came to the camp. A staff team took over from them after a week.

We lent a helping hand in Brussels too. The Belgian capital was overwhelmed with people seeking temporary accommodation while waiting for their asylum process to begin. In response, we converted the WTC III tower into a pre-reception center with a capacity of 500 in record time. The center registered 31,754 overnight stays in 2015.

At the request of the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, we set up 11 new reception centers for asylum seekers in 2015. Our volunteers also offered logistical and technical support with the rapid expansion of Fedasil's reception centers.

September 12

First-aid refresher courses

Saturday, September 12 was World First Aid Day – the perfect opportunity to highlight the importance of first aid. We decided to do so by organizing as many first-aid refresher courses as we could. A three-hour course is a great chance for people who have already received first-aid training to review their knowledge and skills.

We held free first-aid courses in 21 different places, and a total of 108 people took part. Now that they are equipped with the latest knowledge on handling certain emergency and first-aid situations, they will be able to help others if needed.

World First Aid Day is an initiative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



September 17

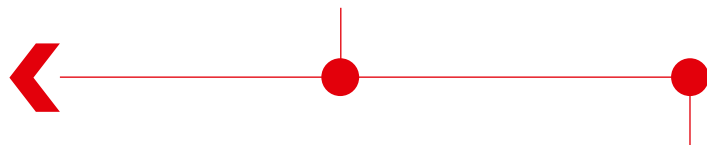
Breaking ground on a new care hotel

A vacation is a basic universal right. But thousands of people in Flanders are housebound due to disability, old age or illness. With these people in mind, we run Adapted Holidays in cooperation with the Netherlands Red Cross, which owns two care hotels, a vacation home and a cruise ship.



In Flanders, very few individual hotel vacations offer fully adapted accommodation and a complete range of care. We hope to change that with the construction of the Polderwind care hotel in Zuienkerke, near the coast. The first brick was laid on September 17 in the presence of Minister-President Geert Bourgeois, Zuienkerke Mayor Alain De Vlieghe and former motocross rider Joël Roelants.

Polderwind is set to open in 2018, at which point we will be able to provide relaxing vacations for 45 vacationers and their carers each week.



September

Reuniting families in the Balkans

Thousands of migrants arrive in transit camps in the Balkan region each day. Many of them were separated from their families as they fled. We are helping the Red Cross Societies in the Balkans to set up Tracing networks.



We try to provide migrants with information about their families as quickly as possible at Restoring Family Link points. The Tracing network allows us to contact our Red Cross colleagues at the previous or next border crossing. Migrants can wait in our special Red Cross tent for the rest of their families to arrive.

We are working on preventive measures to stop people from getting separated: not splitting up families during the registration process or forcing people to board buses when they are still waiting for family members, allowing families to go to hospital together, encouraging people to learn phone numbers by heart, and so on. We are constantly endeavoring to make relief workers, emergency physicians, police officers and military personnel aware of these high-risk situations.

October 1

Brand-new courses

We introduced our new range of training courses for Red Cross Youth on October 1, after overhauling the course content, setting minimum targets and reviewing the skills profiles.

Our revamped course range is designed to correspond more closely with the roles that Red Cross Youth volunteers perform in practice. It also meets the Flemish government's new requirements for the organization of approved training courses for youth work facilitators, head facilitators and instructors.



October

All alone in Belgium

The influx of unaccompanied refugee minors peaked in the second half of 2015, with some 5,078 such minors registering with the Guardianship Service each month. The result: a severe shortage of reception places for this vulnerable target group.

We attach great importance to having high-quality reception facilities for children and young people. With that in mind, we rolled out special measures for unaccompanied refugee minors in seven regular reception centers and three emergency reception centers. That called for flexibility, dedication and skill on the part of each center's management team and personnel. The reception places had to meet various additional infrastructure and support criteria.

Thanks to the efforts of our reception center personnel, we were able to offer temporary accommodation to children and young people aged from 10 to 18, expanding our reception capacity from 40 to 312 places.

October 31

Urgent appeal

In a wholly unprecedented move, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer jointly appealed for concerted efforts to find solutions to conflicts worldwide.

Around 60 million people fled conflicts and violence in 2015. Ban Ki-Moon and Peter Maurer called on member states to use every means at their disposal to make parties to conflict respect international law and relieve citizens' suffering.



Relief workers, medical transports and hospitals have repeatedly been targeted during conflicts. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is deeply concerned that medical personnel and buildings protected by international law are coming under attack.



November 7

Kunst@rodekruis

Artists are often socially engaged people. That much was clear from the Kunst@RodeKruis art event held in Ronse from November 7 to 11. The initiative was the brainchild of the Red Cross branch in Ronse and was devised as a means of raising as much money as possible for the construction of the Polderwind care hotel in Zuienkerke.



The collection on show at the event consisted of 165 works by the biggest names in the Belgian art world. Among the exhibitors were Luc Tuymans, Michaël Borremans, Jan Fabre and Honoré d'O, to name but a few. Panamarenko was the event's patron. Some of the works on sale had never been shown in public before, while others were created especially for our exhibition.

The five-day event attracted some 5,000 visitors. Besides, 66% of the artworks found buyers, raising the impressive sum of €150,000 for the Polderwind care hotel.

November

First aid in South Africa

In early November, two members of our First Aid Service set out for South Africa. They were bound for Johannesburg, where they delivered an intensive ten-day training course to future 'master trainers', namely, trainers who will go on to train up new first-aid trainers.

During the course, participants also had the chance to instruct one another. This approach proved extremely popular, as it made for varied, interactive sessions. One participant testifies: "I was able to acquire new knowledge, skills and methods of teaching as well as AFAM learning materials and theory of evidence-based techniques."

The initiative made it possible for us to share our expertise and knowledge of trainer training with experienced trainers from countries like Malawi, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, thus contributing to self-reliance there.

November 19

Where's the toilet?

No other invention has saved as many lives as the toilet. And yet 2.4 billion people – almost one person in three – still have to do without one. On World Toilet Day 2015, we made an extra effort to raise awareness of the problem. Every day, diarrhea kills around 1,000 young children because they do not have access to proper sanitation.

Clean water and access to toilets and soap can save countless lives. With the support of the government, we have set up assistance programs in Burundi, Uganda, Nepal and Malawi. Our three-year water program in the Kasungu district of Malawi wrapped up in 2015. Before, around 40% of the district's residents did not have access to water supplies. Our program installed 36 water taps, among other things. Now, 3,420 households in the district have access to safe water.



November

Caring for people with dementia

The Zorgbib library's motto is 'More than just a book' for a reason. For care home residents, the chance to chat with our volunteers is just as important as the books they can borrow. However, people with dementia no longer get anything from regular books. We are receiving more and more requests from occupational therapists and facilitators for appropriate reminiscence images to stimulate people's memories.

That is why we got involved in producing 'De schat van je leven. Herinneringen ophalen met mensen met dementie' (A walk down memory lane with people with dementia). This work is made up of three reminiscence films designed to call up memories in older people, especially those with dementia.

This special edition – the first in a series – is an exciting new addition to our collection for older people, which also includes large-print books, read-aloud books, audiobooks, activity resources, reminiscence books and DVDs, and picture books.



December 26

Warm-hearted donors

Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fell on Fridays in 2015, resulting in two long weekends in a row. That was bad news for the blood supply – especially the platelet supply, because platelets can only be stored for five days.

To address the problem, we organized special openings at our donor centers on Saturday, December 26 and Saturday, January 2 with a view to securing the blood supply over the holidays.



We set ourselves the target of finding 2,016 warm-hearted donors over those two days. In the end, we got 2,121. Across the entire holiday period, a total of 13,297 people donated blood at our centers. This outstanding result meant that we had no problem keeping hospitals supplied with blood over the holidays.

December

Sustained relief efforts in Syria

The conflict in Syria has been causing unacceptable human suffering for almost five years now. Economic collapse and countless violations of international humanitarian law have worsened the situation further. 250,000 people have been killed, while millions of others have been displaced. More than 13 million people are in desperate need of assistance.

We are working with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to help the most vulnerable. We are in dialogue with all the parties concerned. Our fundamental principles – which include humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality – always underpin all of our relief efforts.



Flanders has displayed great solidarity. Frank Geets and Dirk Vanderpoorten presented us with a check for €39,533 on behalf of all 40,000 employees of the Flemish government. Thanks to their support, government funding and donations from the public, we can help the people of Syria by providing hygiene supplies, engaging in logistical capacity-building and distributing much-needed milk powder.

December 30

Blood bag recall

After we receive blood from donors, it is split into red blood cells, plasma and platelets. Our blood-splitting procedures are very rigorous and are monitored constantly.



An inspection showed that at a certain stage in the production process, a tiny perforation could appear in the bags used for red blood cells. This would allow bacteria to enter the bags. To eliminate the risk of a contaminated blood product being given to a patient, we recalled 2,026 units of red blood cells from hospitals. However small the risk, donor and patient safety is always our top priority.

Luckily, we were able to replenish hospitals' supplies immediately using products that we had in stock.



Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is an independent voluntary organization. We help people everywhere, every day. Our activities are made possible by our thousands of volunteers, who work in perfect tandem with our employees. Our strategic plan and long-term objectives seek to ensure that we can remain effective in the future too. We make a concerted effort to research and innovate so that we can provide even better, even more efficient assistance.

Organization



Three cheers for our volunteers!	24
Our staff is vital too.....	26
Research and innovation efforts	28
Great results for Pledge 2015	29

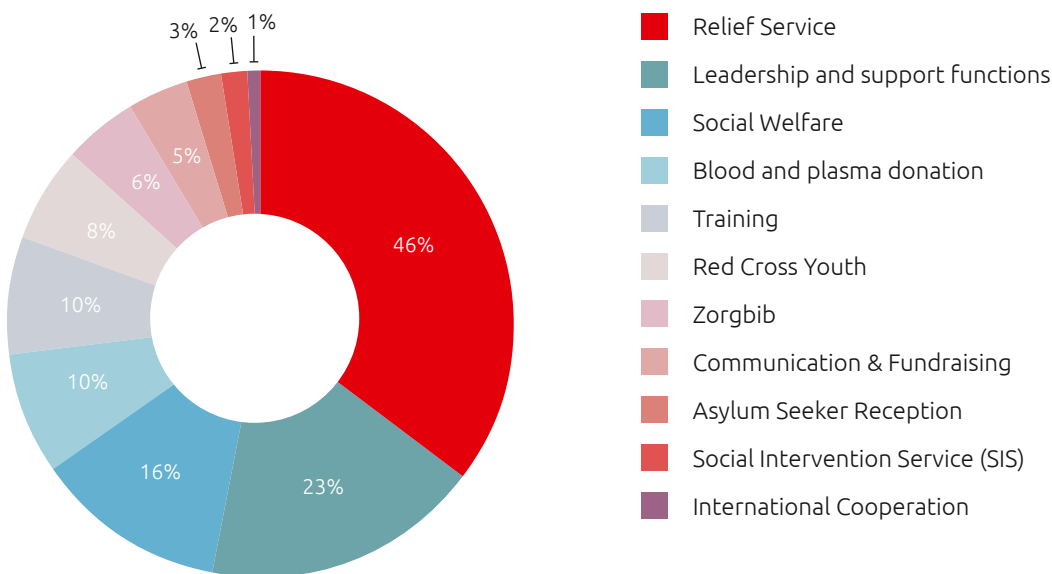
Three cheers for our volunteers!

People helping people: that is what Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is all about. In Flanders, we have 13,815 volunteers across 249 local branches. They help people in a myriad of ways.

13,815 volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of our operations. That makes us unique. Our 13,815 volunteers in Flanders help people in a wide variety of ways. They did so in 2015 too: as a one-off or on a daily basis, as first-aiders, instructors or support workers, alone or in groups. The vast majority of them were active in one of our local branches.

Proportion of volunteers by activity



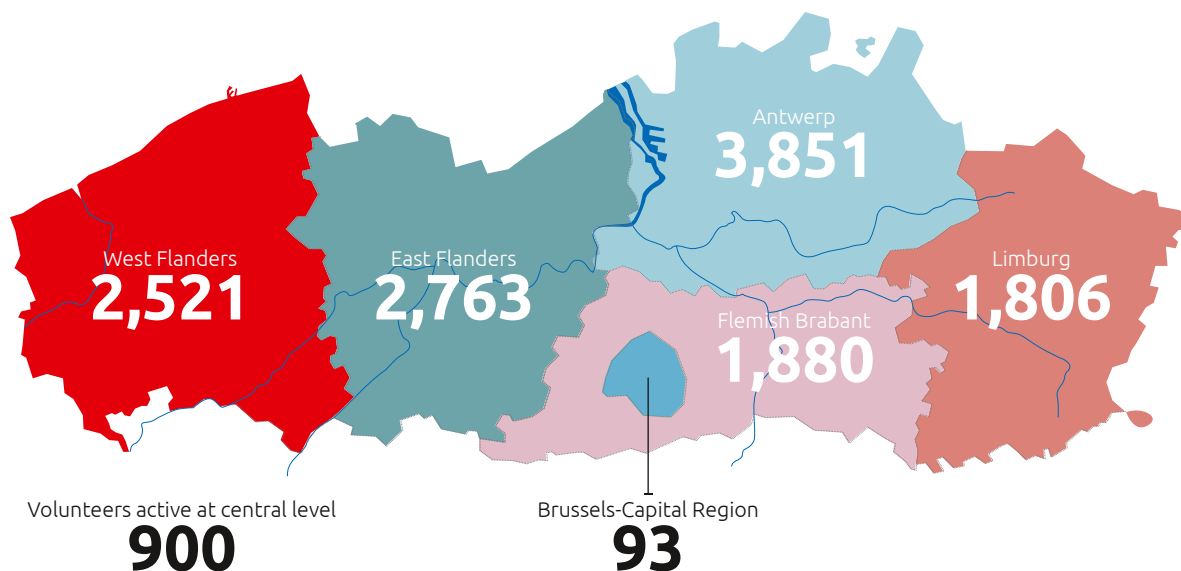
Total: 17,884 volunteers*

* The number of volunteers in this chart is higher than the total number of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders volunteers as some volunteers perform more than one role.

249 local branches

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders has 249 local branches spread throughout Flanders. That means that we are very close to our local communities and find out quickly when our help is needed. Many branches also have a Red Cross Youth branch that organizes activities for children and young people. In 2015, we had 104 youth branches.

Number of volunteers by province



Our staff is vital too

Alongside our many volunteers, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders had 1,480 staff members in 2015. They support our operations or carry out tasks that cannot be undertaken by volunteers. Roles within our organization are highly diverse: some require in-depth expertise in a specific field, while effective interpersonal skills are crucial for others. We expect our staff to behave with the utmost professionalism at all times, in every situation.



Urgently seeking new staff members

We have hired a lot of new employees for our emergency reception centers since the start of the asylum crisis in August 2015. Throughout Flanders, we rushed to recruit more staff. That really put the agility of our Human Resources (HR) department to the test. The figures speak for themselves:

- + 11 job days
- + 5,500 applicants
- + 2,100 interviews
- + 400 new employees

Organizing job days enabled us to screen and test large numbers of applicants over a single day. We tested their theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as examining their interpersonal skills. That gave us a very clear overview of each applicant's ability. We selected the best applicants at the end of each job day and signed their contracts and completed all the administrative formalities before the week was out.

Thanks to our fruitful collaboration with VDAB, we were able to make every job day a success. We also conducted an in-depth assessment after the event with a view to doing even better the next time round. After 11 job days, we had found the right applicant for every single one of our roles – from handyman to support worker.

Students welcome too

A lot of students gained first-hand experience of the Red Cross in 2015. Some of them spent a few days observing our work, while others came for internships lasting several weeks or months – mostly in connection with a dissertation, thesis or doctorate. All in all, we received 53 students from 14 disciplines.

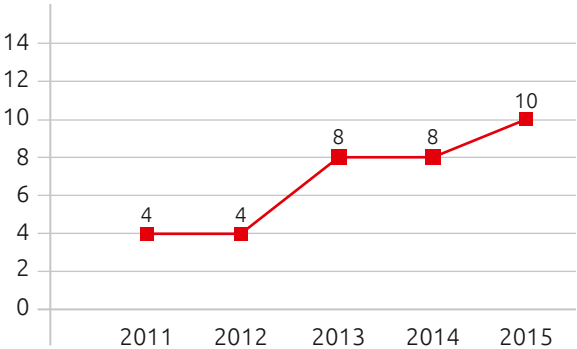


Research and innovation efforts

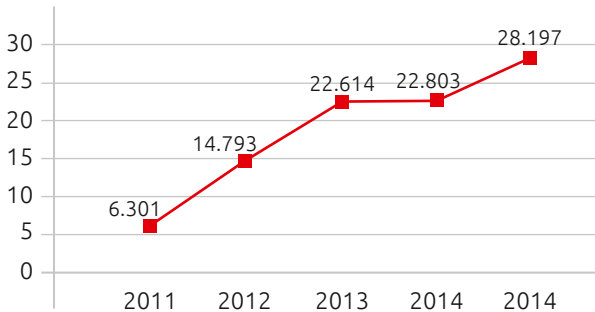
As it is still the case that very little research is carried out into our activities worldwide, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders makes a concerted effort to research and innovate. Research in relation to our blood activities focuses primarily on platelets and blood donors. We also conduct research into first-aid training, promotion of hygiene, first-aid provision and disaster preparedness.

Since our knowledge and skills are extremely useful for everyone, we give lectures and attend conferences. We also share our knowledge and expertise via a range of scientific publications. In 2015, we published 20 articles: 10 articles had a Belgian Red Cross-Flanders staff member as the main author (first or last author), while 10 articles were written in cooperation with other institutions or for Master's theses (with Belgian Red Cross-Flanders listed as a co-author).

Number of publications with impact factor*, where a Belgian Red Cross-Flanders staff member is the first or last author



Trend in cumulative impact factor of scientific publications where a Belgian Red Cross-Flanders staff member is the first or last author



*The impact factor of a scientific journal indicates how often that journal's articles are cited in other articles. The impact factor can be used to gauge how important a journal is compared to other journals in the same field.

Great results for Pledge 2015

At Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, we are always thinking about the future. That is why we draw up long-term objectives to help us improve constantly and keep up with the latest developments.

Pledge 2015

In 2011, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders launched Pledge 2015, the organization's five-year plan for 2011-2015. It was an ambitious strategic plan comprising quantifiable action points, with the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society as its central concern. Pledge 2015 revolved around eight core guidelines:

1. Promoting self-reliance
2. Geared up for emergencies
3. Leaders in blood supply
4. Caring for the vulnerable
5. Inspiring volunteers
6. Working together to achieve greater impact
7. Offering a top-level, top-quality service
8. Maintaining a high profile

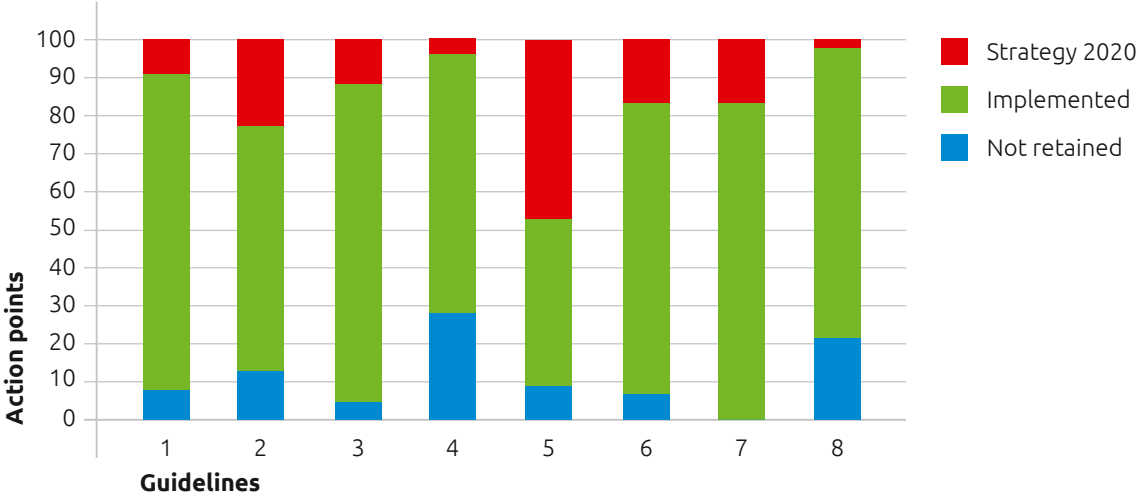
The plan paved the way for structured development with measurable results. The core guidelines were translated into 41 goals and 427 tangible action points. This enabled us to accurately measure whether we had achieved our targets.

A resounding success

When the five years were up, we reviewed our progress on Pledge 2015. We found that over 70% of the action points had been implemented, 17% had been carried over to our next five-year plan, Strategy 2020, and 13% had not been retained for various reasons.

Most of the actions presented in this annual report are directly or indirectly connected to Pledge 2015. Examples include the centralization of our Blood Service on two campuses, our care hotel that is currently under construction, and our new facility for our Library Service.

Progress on Pledge 2015 action points







Financial report



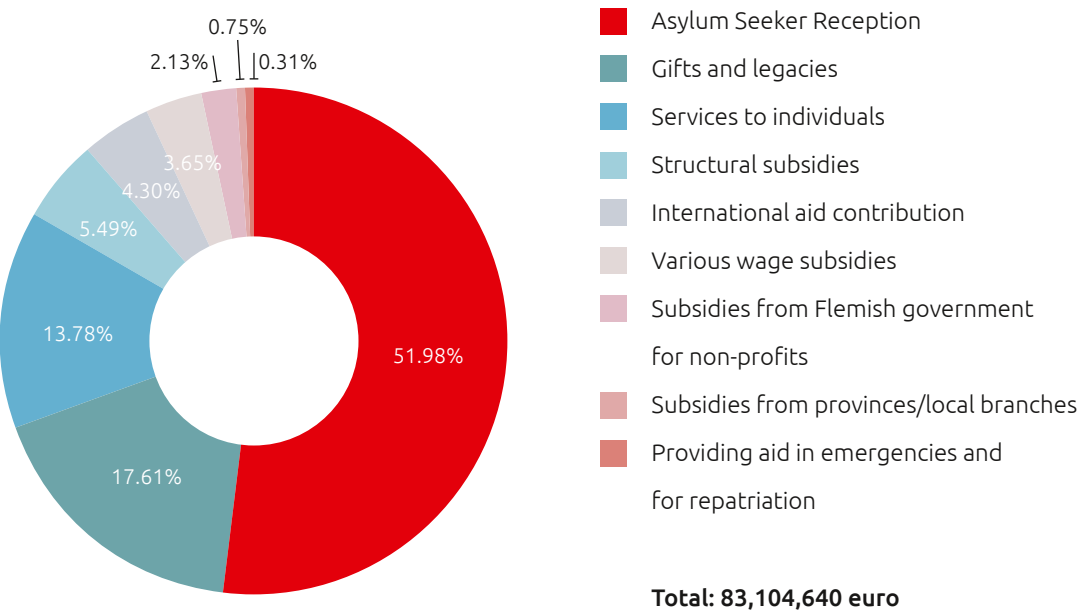
Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income	34
Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' costs	36
Statement of results.....	42
How is any profit used?	43

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income

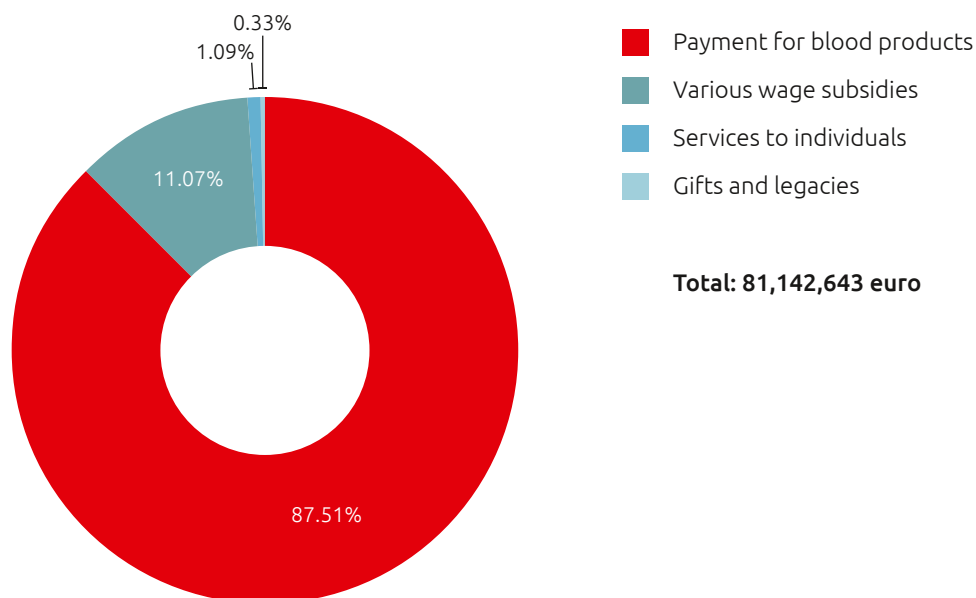
General income

In 2015, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income totaled **€164.24 million**: **€83.10 million** for Humanitarian Services and **€81.14 million** for the Blood Service. This income came from a range of sources.

General income Humanitarian Services



General income Blood Service



Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income has been consolidated so this overview only shows income from external sources. Amounts paid from one Red Cross entity to another under transfer pricing arrangements are not included.

Gifts and legacies from individuals and companies

9.07% (**€14.90 million**) of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income came from gifts and legacies from individuals and companies. Of this amount, €2.82 million came from the over 565,000 loyal buyers of Red Cross stickers and items. Companies that donated to us included Lenovo, Dovy and Jetair. We also received support from a number of structural partners: the National Bank of Belgium, AG Insurance, Hansaplast, Electrabel GDF SUEZ, Canon and BNP Paribas Fortis.

Structural subsidies for general operation

2.78% (**€4.55 million**) of our income consisted of structural subsidies from the federal government and the National Lottery.

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' costs

General overview

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' income is used to support a number of activities. For many of those activities, we can rely on the unpaid efforts of our volunteers. However, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders naturally has to provide high-quality training, support and equipment. Below is a general overview of the operational costs in each field.

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' costs

Humanitarian Services (operations in Flanders and international operations, excluding asylum seeker reception)	€40,770,099
Blood Service	€79,699,826
Reception centers for asylum seekers	€43,987,053
Total	€164,456,978

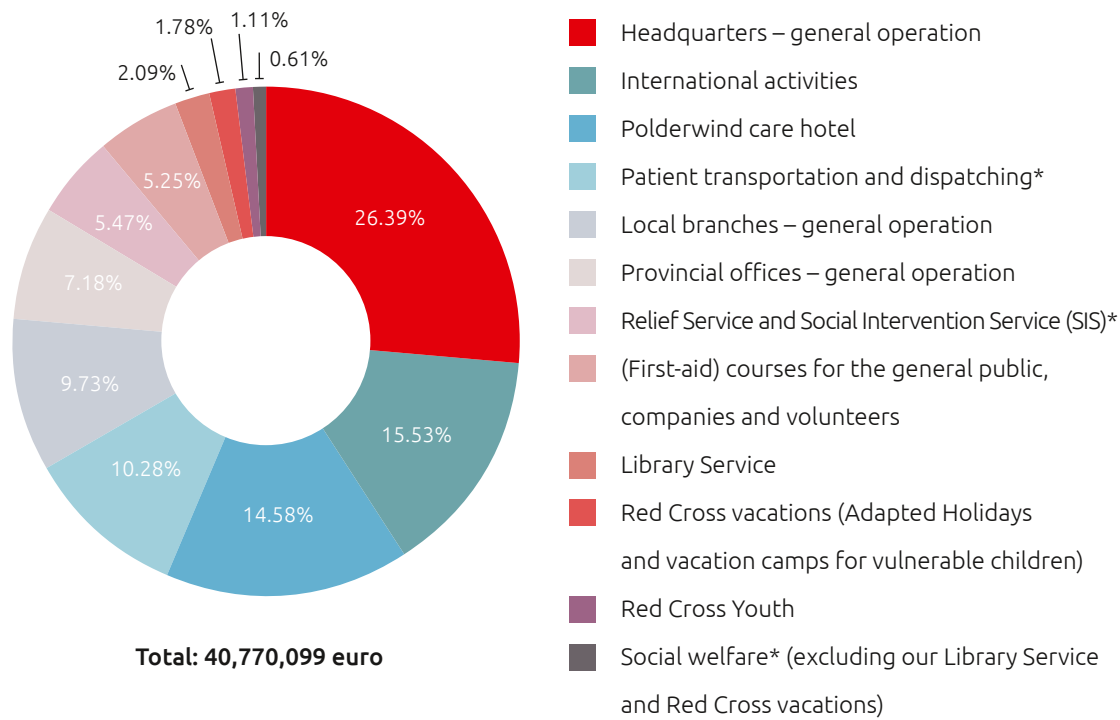
In contrast to our income, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' costs are not consolidated. Income comprises only revenue from external sources. Where costs are concerned, the amounts posted include sums paid from one Red Cross entity to another. This arrangement ensures that we provide a complete picture of the costs of the various Red Cross entities.

The consolidated result was **€3.21 million**.



Humanitarian Services

The costs incurred by Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' Humanitarian Services totaled **€40.77 million**. These costs can be broken down into a number of activities.



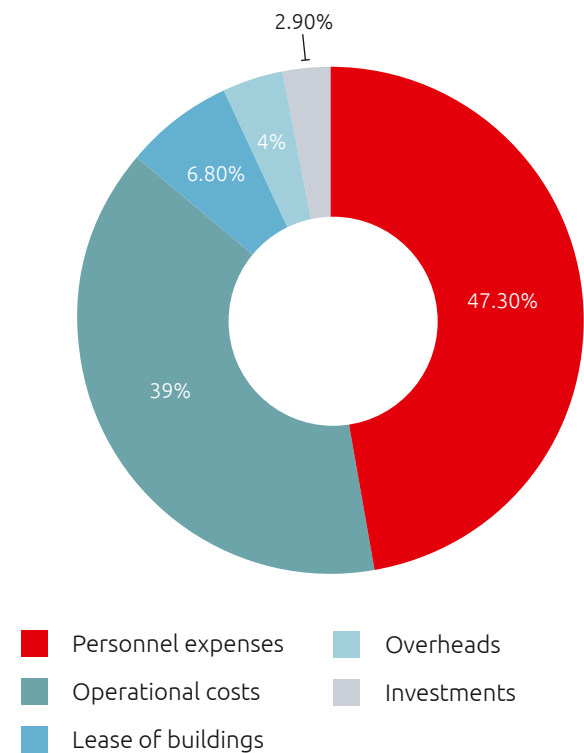
* The share of costs incurred by local sections in these figures is based on a representative sample of the 249 sections.

Asylum Seeker Reception

Costs under reception agreement

This part relates to expenditure laid down in the reception agreement with Fedasil (Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers). For 2015, the government set the maximum daily price of a regular reception place at 94% of the basic amount of €40.83 (i.e. at €38.38). This budget includes all costs for basic asylum seeker reception: personnel expenses, lease of and investment in buildings, operational costs and overheads (use of the Belgian Red Cross-Flanders Central Supporting Services).

Costs under reception agreement

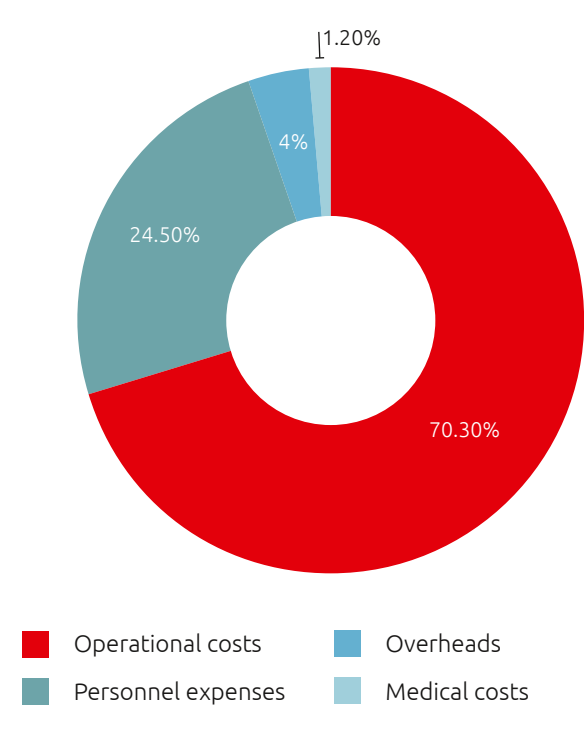


Total: 23,704,412 euro

Emergency reception costs

At Fedasil’s request, we opened 11 additional reception centers in 2015. The operational costs for emergency reception included adjustments to the buildings, the provision of temporary reception places, the purchase of furniture and sanitary facilities, and expenditure on catering and hygiene kits for the asylum seekers.

Emergency reception costs



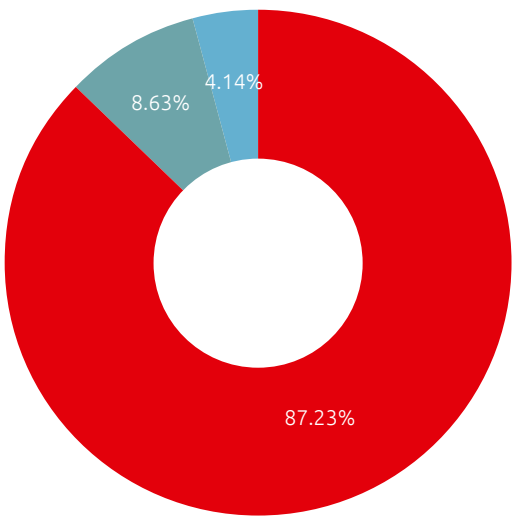
Total: 16,370,252 euro

Additional costs

Some expenditure is not included in the daily price, but is also covered by Fedasil or other bodies. Specifically, that means:

- + the medical costs of asylum seekers resident in our centers;
- + the costs of our integration activities: in 2015, Fedasil provided funding for the staff employed to carry out this task and some of the resources needed to organize activities;
- + guardianship of unaccompanied refugee minors. The costs incurred for this work are covered in full by the Ministry of Justice and an allowance from the Maribel social fund.

Additional costs



- Medical costs
- Guardians
- Integration

Total: 3,912,389 euro



Contributions to the International Red Cross

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders paid the mandatory membership contribution of **€391,195** to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The Red Cross/EU Office, which acts as a link between the National Red Cross Societies in the countries of the European Union and the European Union itself, received a membership contribution of **€27,592**.



Blood Service

The Blood Service's income consists of the amounts paid by hospitals for supplied blood products, fees for laboratory testing and a few subsidies. This income is used to cover the costs of donor recruitment and retention, blood collection, testing and processing of blood products and the distribution of blood products to hospitals. For our Blood Service, it is crucial to maintain continuity and to keep on improving. That is why we reinvest a proportion of resources into new techniques, equipment and developments.

The total operating costs of the Blood Service amounted to **€79.69 million**. These costs can be broken down by activity, as follows:

Collection of blood products

Purchase of high-quality collection equipment, wages of the doctors and staff responsible for safe and orderly collection, payments for Red Cross branches, operational and infrastructure costs for mobile and static collection facilities, and so forth.

Processing and distribution of blood products

Once the blood has been tested and approved, we process it into the various blood components requested by hospitals. To ensure that the blood we supply is as safe as it can possibly be, we often apply additional pathogen-inactivation techniques. We then store it under strictly monitored conditions. Finally, we distribute it in line with stringent rules.

Laboratory testing

Specific laboratories perform either tests on donor blood or specialist tests at the request of hospitals and external laboratories. This item of expenditure includes the cost of laboratory equipment, infrastructure and personnel.

General operation

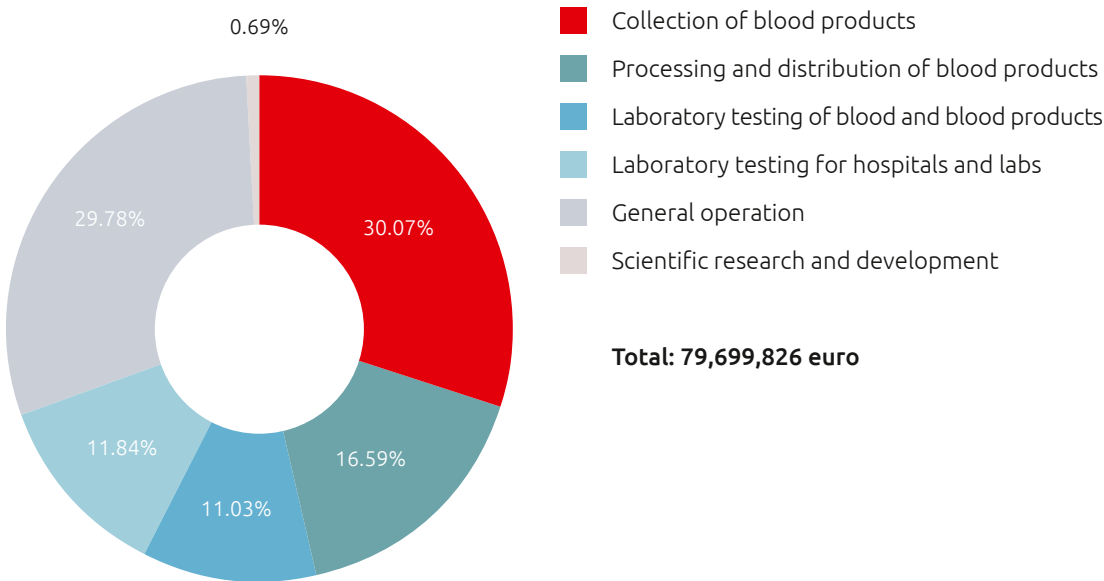
This covers expenditure on Central Supporting Services (HR, Finance, Communication and ICT), on producing and printing publications, on administrative work for blood processing and

distribution centers, on donor recruitment and on the Quality Department. This item also includes depreciation on investments and the costs relating to buildings.

Scientific research and development

The Blood Service believes it has a duty to advance and promote scientific research in its area of work (blood banking and transfusion in general). Scientific research supports and facilitates the introduction of new and better techniques into daily practice, which makes our blood even safer.

Costs Blood Service



Total: 79,699,826 euro

Statement of results

	2014	2015
Income	€137,671,837	€164,247,283
Turnover	€75,622,623	€76,182,313
Change in stocks	-€64,141	€59,776
Membership fees, gifts, legacies and subsidies	€59,401,399	€84,708,478
Other income	€2,711,957	€3,296,716
Costs	€133,907,835	€161,035,894
Consumables	€20,831,241	€25,080,394
Services and other goods	€43,408,525	€60,053,433
Wages, social security costs and pensions	€57,350,218	€58,823,420
Depreciation	€9,839,914	€9,281,730
Amounts written off	€318,570	€105,442
Provisions for liabilities and charges	€357,837	-€1,266,853
Other costs	€1,801,529	€8,958,328
Result	€3,764,002	€3,211,389
Financial result	€1,314,188	€1,080,163

How is any profit used?

We reinvest any profit we make into bolstering various Red Cross funds or channel it into special large-scale projects, such as our Polderwind care hotel, that require significant investment.



To ensure that we are able to finance and implement our strategic work plan, we have set up a number of different funds. With the exception of the Emergency Relief fund, we only use the interest earned on our capital. This enables us to guarantee the long-term investment required for our activities and means that we are less reliant on fluctuating annual subsidies or available funds within the Red Cross.

The **Blood Service Scientific Research and Development fund** promotes development work, medical practice founded on evidence-based criteria, and scientific research within our Blood Service. It does so by providing support to researchers directly or to external institutions with which we conduct scientific research.



Our **Social fund** comprises the financial resources required to develop and implement care activities from a structural standpoint, e.g. vacations for vulnerable children and Adapted Holidays for people with disabilities. In 2015, we used the interest earned on our capital to reimburse vacationers' travel expenses.

Our **Development fund** ensures that our international development projects continue and grow. We use this money to fund our own contributions to Red Cross projects which are partly funded by government. This enables us to fund more such projects. We can also use resources in this fund to support difficult-to-finance projects (such as past disasters which are no longer headline news and to bolster Red Cross societies in the South).

Our **Disaster-preparedness fund** is used to finance limited capacity-building (primarily training sessions) in disaster



management and preparedness. We also use resources from this fund to set up targeted pilot projects in potential new partner countries as test cases for a new partnership. Finally, this fund is also used to finance the 20% own contribution required once we have secured larger-scale co-financed donor projects through the steps mentioned and based on our knowledge and experience. In this way, we are able to increase the available amount fivefold through donor financing.

Our **Emergency Relief fund** enables us to respond quickly to a disaster without having to wait for funds to be raised, as these generally only become available several days after a disaster has struck. If we need to use money from this fund, we always top it up again afterwards through public fundraising or from government funds.

Our **Education fund** provides financial support to all manner of new educational initiatives. These take many different forms.



Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' Tracing Service tracks down missing persons, tries to reestablish contact and strives to reunite family members. At present, we have no source of structural

financing for this activity. **The Tracing fund** was created in 2015: It will be built up over the next few years to provide long-term funding for our tracing work.



As part of our Pledge 2015 strategy plan, we concluded a number of agreements in principle to enable funds to be built up more quickly. This enables us to use our own funds to set up more projects of the sort we would be unable to fund via conventional sponsorship.

Overview of funds	2015
Blood Service Scientific Research and Development fund - Blood Service	20.1 million euro
Development fund	4.0 million euro
Social fund	3.2 million euro
Disaster-preparedness fund	0.8 million euro
Emergency Relief fund	0.5 million euro
Education fund	0.3 million euro
Tracing fund	0.3 million euro

Colophon

Editorial:

Rode Kruis-Vlaanderen

Design:

Rode Kruis-Vlaanderen

Photography:

American Red Cross/Niki Clark

Bloedserieus vzw

Bob Van Mol

Pieter-Jan De Pue

Luc Dewaele

FedAsil - Dieter Telemans

Marc Gysens

ICRC/Nadia Shira Cohen

IFRC/Ibrahim Malla

IFRC/Palani Mohan

IFRC/Cheryl Ravelo

IFRC/Stephen Ryan

IFRC/Carl Whetham

Jens Mollenvanger

Norwegian Red Cross/Thea Rabe

Frank Toussaint

Responsible publisher:

Philippe Vandekerckhove

Motstraat 40

2800 Mechelen



D/2016/0665/23

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www.rodekruis.be/annualreport



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