

PRESS RELEASE

Gijs de Vries opts to seek out new horizons

Den Haag, 11 January 2018 – Gijs de Vries will be stepping down this year from his position as Secretary General of the Netherlands Red Cross. He informed staff of this today at a New Year's gathering. In the coming weeks, he will turn 60; in this new phase of his life, Mr. de Vries wants to start focussing on taking on supervisory positions, including supervisory directorships, which move follows naturally from his other position as chairman of the Erasmus Medical Center's supervisory board. This is why, during the course of 2018, he will be handing over the day-to-day management of the Red Cross to his successor. His move was prompted by the insights he gained at the time of his past illness in 2012.

Inge Brakman, President of the Netherlands Red Cross: 'Gijs has instilled the Red Cross with new fervour. He will be leaving behind an organisation with a keener focus on its core activities, with a clearer course and a better focus on its volunteers. He leaves behind a financially healthy Red Cross that has both an excellent reputation and a relief effort set-up that is ready to take on the challenges that the future will bring. We will miss his creativity and his ability to innovate.'

Within the districts and departments, he focussed a great deal on the important work carried out by our volunteers. He is the reason why a consistent line was followed that led to certain services being handed over to those parties better equipped to provide them. In his capacity as director, amongst other roles Gijs de Vries directed major relief efforts, both the one on the Caribbean island of Sint Maarten and the one for the tens of thousands of refugees and migrants that arrived in the Netherlands in 2015. As campaign director on behalf of Giro 555, he coordinated the aid campaign 'The Netherlands helps Nepal' that was organised by the SHO (the Cooperating Aid Organisations). He was also responsible for the setting up both of the citizens' support network Ready2Help and the DCHI, the Dutch Coalition for Humanitarian Innovation. Last year, he devoted to supervising the festivities for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Red Cross in the Netherlands, as well as to the publication of the research by the NIOD (the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies) into the role played by the Netherlands Red Cross during the Second World War. Four brilliant editions of the 3FM Serious Request radio campaigns were organised, too, with the final such edition being broadcast from Apeldoorn at the end of last year.

He says that the time spent at the Red Cross has really enriched his life. He was also the person who took the initiative for the relocation to the new head office. There will be more time to reflect on his departure on the occasion of the official opening ceremony in the course of 2018.

The board has begun the process of recruiting his successor. Gijs de Vries will remain in office until this person has been appointed.