

The Assembly, whose main task is to provide overall supervision of the institution's work and to determine the principles and policy that govern its activities, will remain essentially unchanged. It will continue to have 15 to 25 members, who are all Swiss citizens and most of whom serve on a voluntary basis, but has decided to increase the number of its meetings from eight to at least ten per year. In addition, it has set up a management control commission, consisting of five members not on the Executive Board. The commission will be chaired by Pierre Languetin and will assist the Assembly in supervising the institution's executive structure and administration.

The ICRC, always open to opportunities for dialogue, intends to step up its consultations with international experts and to establish closer working relations with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their federation, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

PRESIDENTIAL MISSIONS

Luxembourg (12 March)

The President of the ICRC, accompanied by Mr. Michel Convers, head of the Operational Support Department, travelled to Luxembourg on 12 March 1991.

He was received by H.R.H. the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, President of the National Society, in the presence of Mr. Henri Ahlborn, Vice-President of the Luxembourg Red Cross. The discussions were concerned mainly with a possible financial contribution by the Grand Duchy towards the work of the ICRC in Jordan and with the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

At government level, the ICRC President had talks with Mr. Jacques Poos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, on various ICRC operations in the Middle East and Africa.

Financial issues were then examined in an interview with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Georges Wohlfart; Luxembourg's overall contribution to the ICRC is going to be considerably increased and should exceed 2.5 million Swiss francs in 1991.

During a meeting with the European Community's Political Co-operation Committee (composed of policy directors from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from the twelve Member States) there was a broad exchange of views on the relevance of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions in the context of the Middle East conflict (especially as regards the environment), the meaning and scope of Article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, and the ICRC's operations in the Gulf region, in Africa and in the Israeli-occupied territories; consideration was also given to the development of international humanitarian law, several aspects of which will be broached during the forthcoming International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. These subjects gave rise to numerous topics of discussion, which were also extended to include relations between the ICRC and the United Nations.

Federal Republic of Germany (15 March)

On 15 March 1991, the German Red Cross held an Extraordinary General Assembly to celebrate its reunification and to elect its new Presidium. As a guest, the President of the ICRC, who was invited to take part, conveyed the ICRC's congratulations and, in his address, laid emphasis on the unity and solidarity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was represented by Dr. Karl Kennel, President of the Swiss Red Cross, and Vice-President of the League. Mrs. Gerda Hasselfeldt, Minister of Health, expressed the Government's best wishes. Chancellor Helmut Kohl had sent a letter to the German Red Cross confirming the validity of the official decree recognizing the National Society in 1956.

The General Assembly also served as an opportunity to elect the members of the new Presidium. Botho Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein was elected President and the former President of the German Red Cross of the German Democratic Republic, Dr. Christoph Brückner, was elected as one of its Vice-Presidents.

Italy (15 April)

The President of the ICRC, accompanied by Mrs. Cristina Piazza, a member of the ICRC's Legal Division, went to Turin on 15 April

to give a lecture at the “Scuola d’Applicazione”— a military college for Italian Army career officers.

Some 500 people — officers from the college and civilian and military authorities — attended this lecture, which was entitled “The role of the ICRC during crises and conflicts”.

During his visit, the President met the directors of the Provincial Committee of the Italian Red Cross, the supervisors of the “Scuola d’Applicazione” and the Mayor of Turin.
