

Electrolux helps provide relief after Abruzzo earthquake

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Electrolux and its employees supported the reconstruction of Abruzzo, the Italian region affected by a violent earthquake in Spring, 2009, that left 70 000 homeless. Not only were appliances and a mobile kitchen supplied for tent cities, Electrolux also donated much-needed funds.

Chaos ensued after a violent earthquake shook Abruzzo on the night of April 6th, prompting an immediate response among Electrolux employees. Electrolux factories in Porcia, Susegana, Forlì and Solaro were quick to donate washing machines, dishwashers and kitchens to tent cities and refrigerators for the safe storage of needed medicines.

A fund-raising campaign at Electrolux Italian plants collected 25 000 Euro from factory employees. In addition, Electrolux corporate doubled that amount, and a total of 50 000 Euro was donated to the cause.

Donated and designed a mobile kitchen

Electrolux Professional designed and donated a mobile kitchen, which served as additional support for those living in tent cities during these difficult months.

“We needed to operate in the most effective way,” explains Alberto Zanata, Head of Electrolux Professional. “Therefore, we worked closely with the Civil Defence of ANA (National Alpines Association). Also commonly known as ‘black feathers’, they have a long-standing reputation for managing humanitarian missions that dates back to the Friuli earthquake in the 1970s.”

The first 25 000 Euro were allocated for a special container to house the mobile kitchen designed and donated by Electrolux Professional and equipped with the most suitable solutions to operate in an emergency of this kind. Able to serve up to 600 meals a day, the kitchen will be in use first in Abruzzo and thereafter be included as standard equipment for the ‘black feathers’.

The remaining 25 000 Euro were donated to the Abruzzo fund created by ANA.

“The donation by Electrolux and its employees brings new energies to the reconstruction process in Abruzzo and faith to the people affected by the earthquake,” said Andrea Danieli, Vice President of ANA’s local section and a coordinator of the Civil Defence of ANA, who was among the first volunteers on-site. She is also a former Electrolux Professional employee.

“Life in tent cities is really difficult. Even the simplest task, like preparing daily meals, becomes difficult without the right support. Thousands of people share a few square meters. It’s very hot during daytime and nights can be really humid. Comfort is a mere delusion. The reconstruction in Abruzzo will take a long time. People, projects and solidarity are needed. Nevertheless, the buzzword in the camps is already ‘we’ll start all over again’.”

Electrolux and the ‘black feathers’ joined efforts to support the people affected by the earthquake, so that each town, family and individual can quickly get back on track.

“On behalf of the Civil Defence of ANA, I would like to thank the Electrolux Group”, said General Maurizio Gorza, National Coordinator Civil Defence of ANA. “The donation of the mobile kitchen is very important. This solidarity project relies both on volunteer work and on contributions of people and companies, such as Electrolux, that is strongly committed to humanitarian and social fronts. “

Since its beginnings, the ‘black feathers’ has actively supported emergency relief work in the Alpines. There is no town where they haven’t had a presence. Just a few hours after the earthquake in Abruzzo, about 900 volunteers searched for survivors, set up tent cities, installed camp kitchens, restored radio

relays and cooperated in every way to help and encourage more than 70 000 evacuees”.

Civil Response

The Civil Defence of ANA (the National Alpines Association) was formally born in the early '80s, but has in essence operated since the 1976 earthquake in Friuli, Italy.

Today, it has over 12,000 volunteers and boasts an organization renown for its preparedness. It cooperates actively with local governments, for emergency operations and for forecasts, prevention, recovery, safeguarding and training activities.

Focused on the quick response, the first to arrive are rescue teams in charge of camp installation; to build tents, toilet blocks, logistical supports, radio, etc.). Camp kitchens and the emergency medical station are also set up.

They contributed to relief work in Umbria (1997), Albania (1999), France (2000) and Abruzzo (2009).

The 'black feathers' will be engaged in Abruzzo until autumn, 2009. At its peak, a total of 6,000 volunteers contributed to operations in the region.