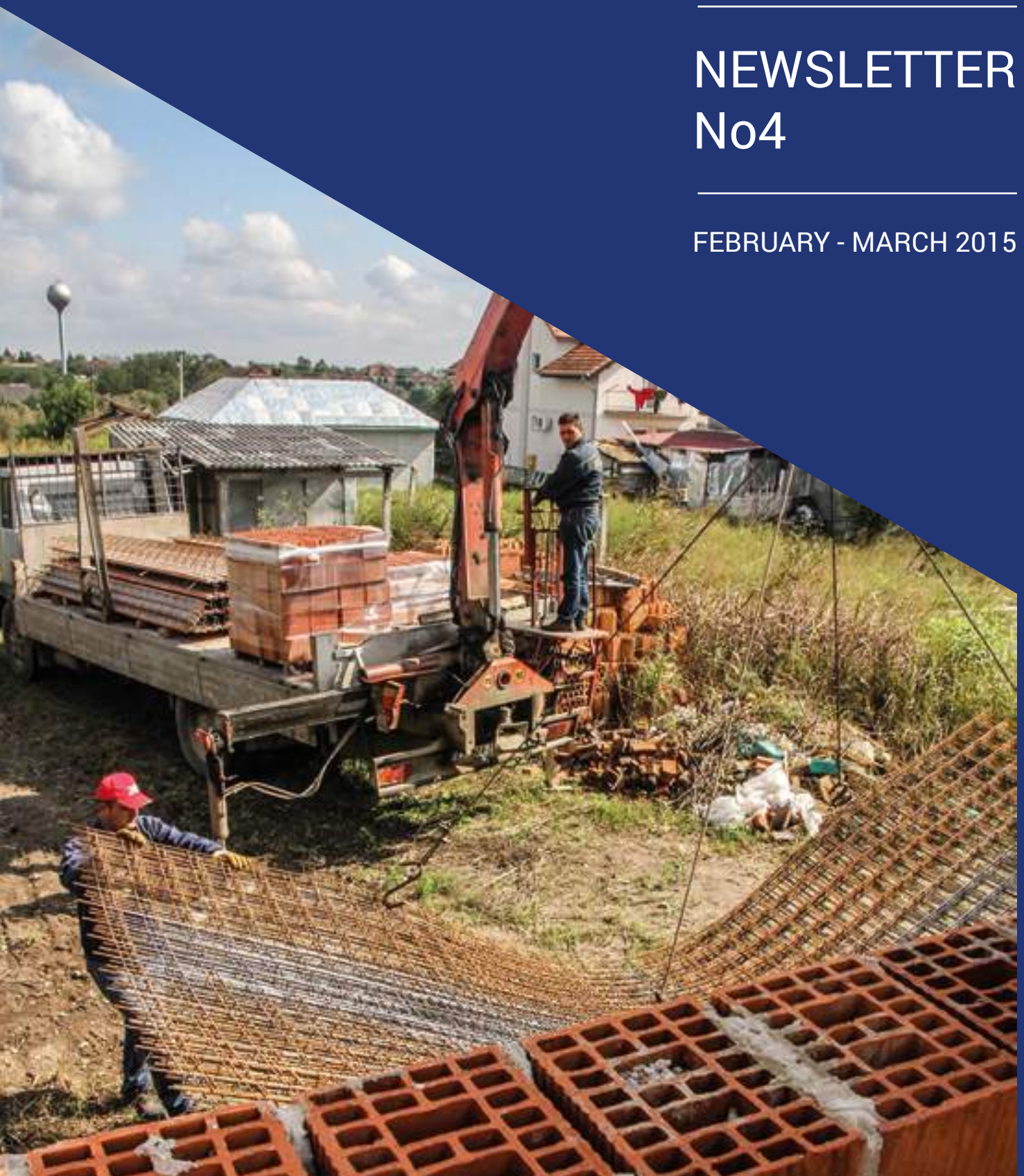




Regional
Housing
Programme

NEWSLETTER No4

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2015



Cover story



FIRST RHP HOUSING SOLUTIONS DELIVERED TO BENEFICIARIES IN BiH

17 March 2015 marked the inauguration of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Country Housing Project. Five beneficiary families signed the contracts in Trebinje City Hall to obtain building material and equipment for the reconstruction of their homes.

This sub-project, which was the first approved by the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors, includes the delivery of 20 building material packages for local integration of refugees from Croatia in Republika Srpska, assistance in the reconstruction of houses for 50 IDP families in the two entities, and reconstruction assistance to 100 returnee families to BiH from other RHP Partner Countries. Its total cost is EUR 2.7 million, out of which EUR 2 387 500 is being provided by the RHP Fund, and EUR 281 000 by Bosnia and Herzegovina as a national contribution.

At the occasion, Mr Davor Cordas, Minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Republika Srpska, stated: "We hope that this donation will help the families to continue their lives in much better living conditions. In the upcoming weeks, we will deliver building material packages to 15 more beneficiary families in the municipalities of Banjaluka, Gradiska and Prijedor". In addition to Mr Cordas, Nedjo Cebedzija, Deputy Mayor of Trebinje and Mario Nenadic, Assistant Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as representatives of UNHCR and OSCE Mission to BiH, participated in the event.

The signing ceremony was followed by site visits to two families in Bogdanici do, who received building material packages. One of them was Mr Petar Babic (61) who said that this donation would help him finally finish his house. He fled from Dubrovnik in 1991 and has been living in rented apartments since.

"I couldn't believe that this is possible, and now it's really happening. I think that in half a year I will have completed the house and will be able to move in. These 23-24 years since I came here, have been a long and difficult period. I've managed to receive my pension and now I will have the house, too. The housing issue is the most problematic one for all refugees, but also for the authorities and this kind of assistance is therefore of utmost importance."



Petar Babic, first RHP beneficiary of building material in BiH

Newsflash

Final removal of containers in Camp Konik

Konik, the largest refugee camp in the Balkans, is settled by Roma and Egyptians who left Kosovo after the conflict in 1999 and came to Montenegro. At the time, there were around 4 000 people living in improvised huts built from scraps of wood, tin and rubbish; today it is a container settlement which currently hosts some 1 500 persons. These people arrived from Kosovo lacking any civil documentation. In order to facilitate the process, national administration, international and humanitarian organizations helped them to overcome existing obstacles and obtain personal documentation from Kosovo. This help enabled them to regularise the legal status of the refugees willing to remain in Montenegro, as well as of those wishing to voluntarily return to their country of origin.

Over the years, the Montenegrin Government, with the support of international organisations, has managed to improve access to education, employment opportunities and social integration of the Camp's residents. The transportation to city schools has been organised for 220 children from the Camp every day, lowering the drop-out school rate to a minimum. Educational workshops on health and social matters have had a high attendance rate and have successfully influenced the Camp's residents' adaptation to everyday urban life.

With the long-term goal of closing the Konik Camp, the Government has been trying to find financing to provide its residents with a permanent housing solutions. In September 2014, the European Commission, through IPA 2007-2013, started the construction of 50 apartments and a community centre for the tenants of the Camp. The rest of the families will get housing assistance through the RHP, with the construction of 120 housing units which is due to begin in the second half of 2015, enabling the final closing of the Camp and a new life for its residents. The total estimated cost of this project is EUR 6.7 million, of which up to EUR 6.2 million has been secured from the RHP Fund. The work on the removal of the containers, current home of the residents concerned, is undergoing and will soon be completed.



Children, tenants of the Konik camp



Budimirka Đukanovic, National RHP Coordinator in Montenegro

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia sign new Grant Agreements

Mr Nikola Spiric, the Minister of Finance of Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed the Grant Agreement for the sub-project BiH2 on 10 March 2015. This grant, amounting to EUR 12.6 million, will secure financing for the provision of permanent housing solutions to 780 households for return and reintegration or local integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The selection of beneficiaries for this sub-project is already underway and the first disbursement will take place in April 2015 enabling imminent start of implementation.

In Croatia, Ms Mirela Stanic-Popovic, Head of the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, signed on 25 February 2015 the Grant Agreement for the Croatian sub-project HR3. This grant, amounting to EUR 3.1 million, will finance the reconstruction of a home for 75 elderly and disabled persons in the city of Glina, currently residing in collective centres in Croatia. This signing was followed by the first grant tranche disbursement on 24 March 2015.

Approval of a new project in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 26 March, the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors approved a grant of approximately EUR 8.6 million in favour of sub-project BiH4. The grant will be used to reconstruct 435 family houses for the return of refugees and IDPs and to construct 45 family houses for local integration of IDPs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Partner Countries' Highlights



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

BENEFICIARY VERIFICATION PROCESS PROGRESSING

The verification of 750 beneficiaries for BiH2, which started at the end of January 2015, gained full speed in February and March 2015. According to the Interim Progress Report prepared by the verification commission at the end of February 2015, 60% out of 1 500 planned beneficiaries were visited in 24 municipalities (11 municipalities in Federation BiH and 13 municipalities in Republika Srpska). 900 beneficiaries were interviewed and 350 applications processed, out of which 150 were pre-selected and 30 are subject to additional check-ups, while the remaining 170 (48%) were not considered eligible for RHP, mainly due to possessing another housing property. In parallel, Technical Assistance engineers have been checking technical details of the existing houses planned for reconstruction, status of the land plot, availability of infrastructure and/or other technical requirements.



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

NEW APARTMENTS FOR TENANTS OF STRMICA COLLECTIVE CENTRE

On 27 March 2015, the representatives of the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care and UNHCR visited tenants of Strmica Collective Centre (located near Knin) and delivered the keys of their new homes in the purchased apartments in Knin.

This event was the continuation of sub-project HR4, under which durable housing solutions will be provided to a minimum of 101 families through the purchase of apartments throughout the country. The implementation of this sub-project started in December 2014, when keys to apartments in Knin and Petrinja were delivered to the first eight refugee families. The provision of housing solutions for Strmica Centre beneficiaries will enable the closing of this collective accommodation in the near future.

During the months of February and March 2015, an additional seven beneficiaries moved into flats in Benkovac, Knin and Obrovac. Furthermore, a new public call for the purchase of a second round of flats was launched in March.



TENDERS FOR SUB-PROJECT HR3 IN GLINA LAUNCHED

Tenders for works and supervision for the reconstruction of a home for 75 elderly and disabled persons were launched on 31 March 2015. The deadline for submission of offers is 24 April 2015, while the construction works are expected to start in mid-June 2015.

Partner Countries' Highlights



MONTENEGRO

TENDER FOR WORKS IN NIKSIC CLOSED

Tenders for works and supervision of two blocks of flats providing housing for 62 families in the Municipality of Niksic were closed on 31 March 2015. The total estimated cost of the sub-project is approximately EUR 2.6 million, out of which approximately EUR 2 million will be provided by the RHP Fund and EUR 600 000 by Montenegro. Provided that the tender is successful, the construction works are expected to start in May 2015.

MEDIA PROMOTION OF RHP IN MONTENEGRO

The TV show "**Be responsible**", dedicated to the implementation of RHP in Montenegro, was presented on Montenegrin national TV on 1 March 2015. The overall scope of the RHP, the process, technical issues, tendering procedures and international support were presented by the MNE National Coordinator, Budimirka Djukanovic, while the beneficiaries' selection activities and the importance of this initiative for them were explained by UNHCR representatives and several potential beneficiaries.



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

TENDERS FOR THE FIRST SUB-PROJECTS CLOSED

The second tender (100 building material packages) under the sub-project **SRB1 – Provision of 125 building material packages and 70 prefabricated houses to the benefit of 195 households** - was successfully closed and the delivery is expected to start in April 2015. 66 prefabricated houses, which are part of the same sub-project, could be installed in June-July 2015, provided that the tender published in February and scheduled to be opened on 15 April, is successful.

The new call to municipalities for the provision of building material packages and village houses under the sub-project **SRB2 - Support to 870 refugee families through four different housing modalities**, was published in February and the evaluation of the submitted applications will be done in April 2015.

FINALISATION OF BENEFICIARIES' AND MUNICIPALITIES' SELECTION

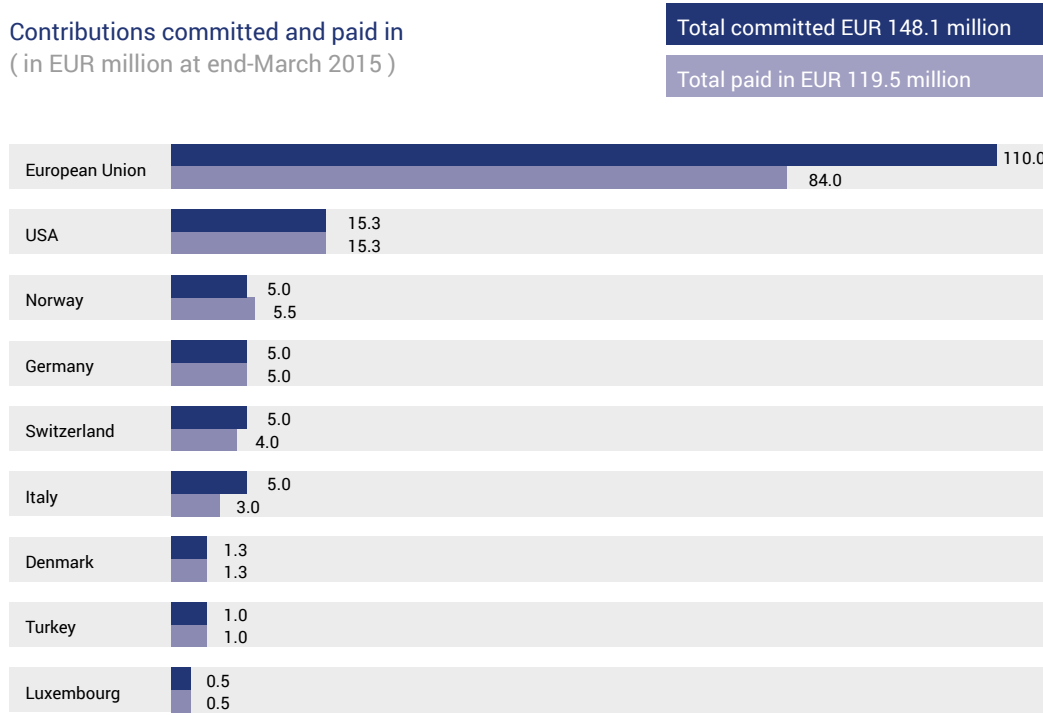
The beneficiary selection process for the **SRB2 - Support to 870 refugee families through four different housing modalities** and **SRB4 - Support to 661 refugee families through four different housing modalities**, done by 24 selection commissions, is entering the final phase. In parallel, the selection of municipalities for the implementation of SRB2 sub-project's components **Provision of 300 building material packages** and **Purchase of 250 village houses**, will be finalised by the end of April, which will represent the beginning of RHP implementation through grants to municipalities. In the upcoming period, several tenders related to implementation of SRB2 and SRB4 will be published.

MEETING WITH TRUSTEES DEDICATED TO RHP IMPLEMENTATION

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia organised the 10th working meeting with municipal trustees from 30 March to 1 April 2015 in Arandjelovac. The main topic of the meeting was the status of implementation of the RHP, which was presented and discussed with 300 trustees, representatives from the international community and RHP Partner Countries. Amongst the issues discussed were: preparation of the technical documentation, procurement procedures, monitoring and financial reporting, visibility requirements, as well as exchange of data with Partner Countries involved in the Programme.

RHP Fund Status

In total, Donors have committed EUR 148.1 million, of which they have paid in EUR 119.5 million. Contributions committed and paid into the RHP Fund are split as follows:

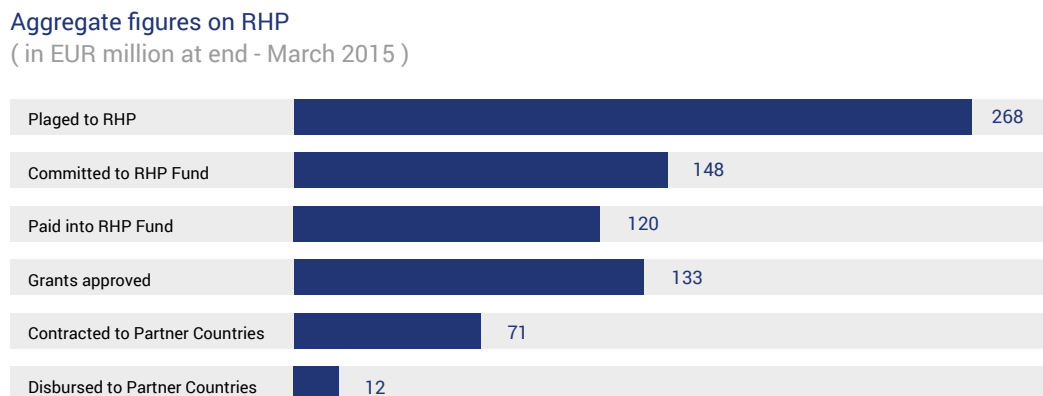


DISBURSEMENTS DURING FEBRUARY-MARCH 2015

A further two grant tranches were disbursed in favour of RHP sub-projects, as follows:

- **SRB2 – Support to 870 refugee families through four different housing modalities:** In early March 2015, the first grant tranche amounting to EUR 5 489 900 was paid out of the RHP Fund.
- **HR3 – Reconstruction and extension of home for the elderly and disabled people in Glina:** At end-March 2015, the first grant tranche, for the amount of EUR 830 006, was paid out of the RHP Fund.

The table below summarizes the situation of the RHP by showing the main inflows and outflows:



Regional Activities

9TH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AND 9TH RHP FUND ASSEMBLY OF DONORS MEETINGS HELD IN PARIS

The 9th Technical Committee and the 9th Assembly of Donors were held on 3 and 26 March 2015 in Paris respectively, gathering RHP Fund Donors and CEB. UNHCR and OSCE participated at the Technical Committee meeting.

During the Assembly of Donors meeting, participants discussed the progress to-date and agreed on the priorities for the upcoming period. The key conclusion is that full focus must now be on implementation; new sub-project approvals could be foreseen for early 2016. One important activity marking 2015 is the carrying out of a Mid-Term Review and a Mid-Term Evaluation of the RHP. These two reviews will run in parallel. The first one, managed by the CEB, will focus on reviewing whether the technical parameters of the RHP, such as described in RHP's founding documents, are still valid. The latter one will be managed by the European Commission and will assess sustainability issues and review whether the original targets in terms of beneficiaries to be covered by the RHP are still valid.

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

- **Procurement Workshop:** On 3-4 February 2015, CEB's Procurement Department organised a workshop in Sarajevo. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, three PIUs (FBiH, Republika Srpska and Brcko District) and the Return Fund. The focus of the workshop was the new public procurement law in BiH and how to ensure its full coherence with CEB guidelines and requirements.
- **Tendering Evaluation Training:** On 4 March 2015, TA organized a tender evaluation training for PROCON in Podgorica. The purpose of the training was to expand PROCON's understanding about the tendering and evaluation processes and raise their capacities to perform these activities.
- **Risk Management Training:** On 5-6 March 2015, CEB provided the training in Podgorica, attended by PROCON and the relevant staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare involved in the RHP, as well as by UNHCR and OSCE. The objective was to help Montenegro develop an individual risk register. This risk register will be regularly monitored and updated to support and foresee challenges during RHP's implementation.
- **Contract Management Training:** On 16 March 2015, TA organised the training for Croatia's PIU in Zagreb. The purpose was to raise the capacities of the PIU in managing contracts for services, supply and works through concrete examples of other contracts currently being implemented in Croatia.

About RHP People

Ms Eleni Vossou who has been the Project Manager in Unit D3- Regional Cooperation and Programmes, DG Enlargement in the European Commission since 2012, has recently changed her position within the Unit. For this reason, she will not be following up on RHP related matters anymore. Ms Vossou's successor is **Ms Liane Adler**, Programme Manager on Human Rights Issues and Vulnerable Groups. She will be working on RHP related matters in close coordination with Mr Nicola Bertolini, Head of Sector, European Commission/DG NEAR.

Upcoming Activities (April-June 2015)

RHP Meetings

12 May 2015

13th Regional Coordination Forum, Podgorica, Montenegro

2 June 2015

10th Technical Committee, Paris, France

30 June 2015

10th Assembly of Donors /
6th RHP Steering Committee, Podgorica, Montenegro



www.regionalhousingprogramme.org



Bosnia and Herzegovina



Republic of Croatia



Montenegro



Republic of Serbia

The Regional Housing Programme is financed and supported by the International Community



The Regional Housing Programme was set up to offer durable housing to 74,000 vulnerable individuals who became refugees or displaced persons following the 1991-1995 conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. The RHP is to be implemented with the support of the international community.

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