



Regional
Housing
Programme

RHP NEWSLETTER 2015





Korenica new apartments, September 2015

Main Milestones in 2015



6 Grant Agreements signed: total amount EUR 70 million

3 Constructions sites inaugurated: Niksic, Montenegro; Glina and Knin, Croatia

1 Building completed: Korenica

58 Flats purchased throughout Croatia

150 Packages of building materials delivered in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

227 Families altogether provided with housing solutions

Over two hundred families in the region will share the same highlight of the year 2015: they finally have a roof over their heads. The common factor between all these families in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia is the RHP, thanks to which the families were provided with permanent homes after 20 years of displacement.

Although still relatively modest in numbers, the year behind us showed that RHP implementation is moving ahead and that the work invested during the preparatory phase has started to pay off. Notwithstanding the current refugee crisis and its implications on the Partner Countries, especially on Serbia and Croatia, the RHP implementation continued with an equally high level of commitment by the implementing Partner Countries and the international stakeholders. The RHP Donor countries also need to be commended for their strong and continuous support.

Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

PURCHASE OF APARTMENTS

The project "Purchase of 101 apartments" in Croatia continued successfully in 2015. The beneficiaries selected to benefit from this project are former tenancy right holders or residents in collective centres. **8 families already moved into their new apartments before Christmas 2014. During 2015, the project has moved forward and by the end of the year, 58 apartments had been purchased and most of them handed over to beneficiaries.** The project is scheduled to be completed in the second half of 2016.

*Ms **Ajshe Smakiqi**, born in 1965 in Kosovo, has four children. This 5-member family has been living in collective centres in Croatia since 1999, without any regular income. The Smakiqi family was the first one to receive the keys to an apartment in Petrinja.*



*Ms **Ilinka Knezevic** was born in 1936 in Croatia. Together with her husband Nikola Knezevic (deceased in 2000), Ilinka returned in 1997 to Croatia from Serbia, where the family was in refuge. They moved into her husband's old family house, without basic utilities, located in Oton-Brdo village near Knin. Ilinka, who is retired, has a son Dragan who lives with his daughter in the Netherlands but plans to come back to Croatia. Ilinka received the keys to an apartment in Knin in December 2014.*

Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

CONSTRUCTION OR RECONSTRUCTION OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS

CONSTRUCTION OF AN APARTMENT BUILDING FOR 29 FAMILIES IN KORENICA, CROATIA

In September 2015, the first 26 families received the keys to their new apartments in the first RHP -financed apartment building in Croatia. This building has in total 29 flats, and, as of December 2015, only one family still needs to sign the lease contract. Korenica is located in the Municipality of Plitvice Lakes, which is part of the Areas of Special State Concern. The land plot of about 2 000m² was donated by the municipality. Beneficiary families are returnees or IDPs who used to live in the same area before the war and have now been given the opportunity to return. **This is the first RHP project to be completed.** The works were finalised in August 2015.

*Bunic in the Lika-Senj County's municipality of Korenica is the native village of Mr **Petar Eror** (75) who currently resides in a neglected house overlooking the Krbava valley. Suffering from a poor health condition, he lives off his pension that he had earned working as the chief of police in the city of Virovitica before the war. As the situation began to deteriorate in Croatia in the early 1990s, Petar Eror and his co-villagers left Croatia and found themselves as refugees in Serbia. As he had spent most of his life in Korenica and still had some friends and relatives left, Mr Eror decided to come back and seek a housing solution there. He had applied several times since 1999. Thanks to the RHP, in September 2015, he received the keys to his new flat in Korenica.*



Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

RECONSTRUCTION OF A HOME FOR 75 ELDERLY AND DISABLED PERSONS IN GLINA, CROATIA

In September 2015, the Croatian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Policy and Youth, Ms **Milanka Opacic**, officially inaugurated the reconstruction works of the Home for the elderly and disabled persons in Glina. This home, which targets in particular persons in need of medical and social assistance, should provide a permanent housing solution for 75 elderly refugees and returnees, currently residing in the collective centre of Pula. The reconstruction works are scheduled to take 14 months, allowing its new tenants to move in before next winter.



CONSTRUCTION OF TWO RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN KNIN, CROATIA, FOR 40 BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS

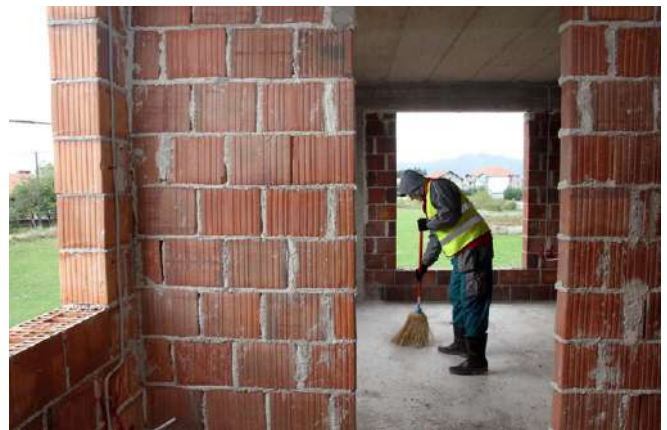
In September 2015, the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care officially inaugurated the works to build two apartment buildings, which will provide apartments for 40 RHP beneficiary families. A large part of the selected families are former tenancy right holders and persons who are currently living in temporary accommodation in the village of Golubic. The construction of the two buildings is scheduled to be completed in November 2016.



Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

CONSTRUCTION OF TWO BLOCKS OF FLATS FOR 62 I/DP FAMILIES IN NIKSIC, MONTENEGRO

The construction works were launched in June 2015 and by December, the external part of the building had been completed, allowing the interior works to continue during the winter. The project is progressing ahead of schedule and, in late May 2016, Montenegro expects the building to be finished and ready to accommodate 62 beneficiary families.



CONSTRUCTION OF 235 APARTMENTS IN OVCA, MUNICIPALITY OF BELGRADE, SERBIA

In order to start the construction of 235 apartments, it was necessary that the City of Belgrade prepared the ground. During 2015, the City contracted the design for the RHP buildings. In addition, the City also carried out the preparatory works at the site, constructed an access road, and designed and put in place the sewage system. It is also close to finalising the construction of a waste water treatment facility. All these activities are funded by the City of Belgrade and will enable the construction of the RHP apartments to start in 2016.

Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

RECONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES

PROVISION OF BUILDING MATERIALS TO 20 FAMILIES AND TURNKEY RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO 150 FAMILIES, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In November 2015, the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms **Semiha Borovac**, hosted an event to mark the launch of the reconstruction works of 26 housing units in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The families who own these 26 houses are mainly returnees who chose to settle in Bosnia and Herzegovina in their pre-war homes, which will now be reconstructed thanks to the RHP contribution.

*Mr **Guta Serif**, together with his 12 family members, returned from Sarajevo to his damaged house, where they all live on EUR 150/month which they receive as assistance for one child with health problems. The family house is located in a mountain village with difficult access, where some winters bring up to two metres of snow. The reconstruction of the house, financed by the RHP, started in November 2015.*



Delivery of RHP Housing Solutions and Progress in 2015

PROVISION OF BUILDING MATERIAL PACKAGES AND PREFABRICATED HOUSES

PROVISION OF BUILDING MATERIAL PACKAGES TO 20 FAMILIES AND TURNKEY RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO 150 FAMILIES, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

As of December 2015, **20 families have received packages** of building materials which they are currently installing.

*The family of Mr **Rasim Cengic** was the first RHP beneficiary in Bosnia and Herzegovina to receive a package of building materials. Mr Cengic has been waiting for this since 1996, when he returned to his destroyed house. His wife and daughter were both wounded in war. He expressed his gratitude to the Donors in the name of his family members and his countrymen who will also receive help for reconstruction of their houses thanks to the RHP.*



PROVISION OF 125 BUILDING MATERIAL PACKAGES AND 66 PREFABRICATED HOUSES, SERBIA

Throughout 2015, 129 building material packages were delivered to beneficiary families in Serbia. The value of each package is EUR 9 000. The delivery of building materials proved to be one of the most efficient housing solutions to implement and will continue at full speed also in 2016.

The construction of 66 prefabricated houses started in autumn 2015. By November, 10 foundations had been laid, while the installation of the remaining ones is planned to be completed by June 2016.



Beneficiary Selection

Efficient and transparent selection of the most vulnerable beneficiaries is a precondition for project implementation to move forward. The Partner Countries have advanced significantly on this front during 2015. As of today, all beneficiaries for RHP projects approved in favour of Croatia and Montenegro are pre-selected. Serbia has completed the selection of beneficiaries for its first project, and it is in advanced stage for all other projects,

with the objective of completing beneficiary selection in 2016. Bosnia and Herzegovina has finalised selecting vulnerable beneficiaries for the first project approved by the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors, and is almost done with the selection for the second project. Bosnia and Herzegovina is progressing with the selection of the remaining beneficiaries.

Regional Cooperation

The RHP has strengthened neighbourly relations and enticed the Partner Countries to cooperate and build trust with each other

The four Partner Countries report that they are proud to support each other and exchange information daily in the interest of maintaining a steady pace of RHP implementation, to finally solve the issue of protracted displacement in the region. Close co-operation between the four countries is a precondition for successful RHP implementation. In the longer term, this should have a positive impact on the stability of the region. This support is nowhere more visible than in the exchange of information to select the most vulnerable beneficiaries across borders.

During 2015, the Partner Countries cross-checked a great number of RHP applicant files administratively, and also verified in the field the situation of each beneficiary identified, to assess their eligibility. In 2016, financial and logistical resources provided by the European Commission and channelled through the CEB, will continue to be available to all Partner Countries to continue conducting these activities. This should help complete beneficiary selection promptly.



Cooperation with Local Governments

The RHP helps strengthen the cooperation between the central and local self-governments, as the Programme is implemented in hundreds of municipalities in the region. Local administrations are thus actively involved in the implementation, including in procurement and in beneficiary selection. This cooperation strengthens the capacities of local administrations.

In Serbia, municipalities play a pivotal role in the implementation of the RHP as some of the projects will be implemented in a decentralised way – by the municipalities themselves - to deliver building material and purchase village houses. A large number of municipalities will see buildings constructed, pre-fabricated houses and building materials installed, and village houses purchased in their territories. An example of this fruitful cooperation was witnessed in October 2015 when 61 Serbian municipalities signed contracts with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of Serbia, aiming at providing more than 2 000 permanent and sustainable RHP housing solutions, with a total cost of EUR 47.5 million. This important ceremony took place in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr **Ivica Dacic**.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 22 municipalities signed, with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, cooperation agreements to implement the first project approved in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina “Provision of building materials to 20 families and turnkey reconstruction assistance to 150 families”. This deep involvement of municipalities will continue in the years to come as a large

number of RHP beneficiaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina will obtain funding for housing reconstruction. The support of municipalities in this effort is very important.

In Croatia, all municipalities involved donate land and commit to the maintenance of the newly constructed buildings in the future. In the case of Glina for instance, the reconstruction of the elderly home also represents an investment opportunity for the City, which will remain beyond the lifespan of the RHP. This building will bring economic opportunities in the form of jobs not just during the construction period, but also in later years.

In Montenegro, municipalities also play an important role in the implementation of the RHP. As in the other Partner Countries, municipalities have donated land and financed the costs of preparing the building sites and the provision of infrastructure. More importantly, municipalities also take in charge the ownership and maintenance of RHP-financed buildings. This is the case in the Konik Camp where 120 most vulnerable families who live in particularly dire living conditions will receive a housing solution. The municipality of Podgorica will have to operate the buildings after the construction is finished.



Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dacic with representatives of 61 municipalities

RHP Mid-Term Review and Mid-Term Evaluation – lessons learnt during RHP's first years

The RHP Donors decided to carry out a Mid-Term Review and a Mid-Term Evaluation of the RHP in the second half of 2015. Both exercises were carried out by independent external experts: the Mid-Term Review by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Mid-Term Evaluation by a consulting company "Particip". The Mid-Term Review, overseen by the CEB, aimed at providing an overall independent assessment of RHP's achievements to date and lessons learned, whereas the Mid-Term Evaluation, supervised by the Commission, focussed on evaluating RHP's achievements as regards beneficiary selection and sustainability-related aspects.

Both comprehensive reviews resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations to all stakeholders. The Donors decided to consolidate these results and formulate the so-called "Donors' Recommendations", a text endorsed by all RHP stakeholders, which will serve as guidelines for RHP activities during the second half of its lifetime.

The Recommendations will serve to support the Partner Countries in:

- Streamlining activities to allow for faster implementation by identifying activities that can be undertaken in parallel;
- Finalising beneficiary selection by concluding cross-border verification of applicants, to select the most vulnerable;
- Enhancing sustainability aspects of RHP-financed projects, to, among other things, better identify social integration and employment opportunities for RHP beneficiaries.

Examples of Complementarity with other Projects and Programmes in the Region

ASSISTANCE FOR INTEGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The NGO Catholic Relief Services (CRS), funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, U.S. Department of State, is assisting the RHP through the project "Supporting sustainable reintegration of returnees in Bosnia and Herzegovina". This project provides socio-economic support to the beneficiaries of the first Bosnian project, in the form of co-financing employment in companies in the place of return or integration, starting a small business, agricultural production or livestock breeding. Seniors and people with health and social problems are supported in exercising their rights to pension and health insurance, professional care, etc.

Examples of Complementarity with other Projects and Programmes in the Region

FUTURE FOR KONIK CAMP RESIDENTS IN MONTENEGRO

Konik is the largest refugee camp in the Balkans, existing since 1999 and currently hosting some 1 500 persons. With the long-term goal of closing the Konik Camp, the Government of Montenegro has endeavoured to provide its residents with permanent housing solutions. In September 2014, the Government of Montenegro started the construction of 50 apartments and a community centre for the tenants of the Camp. This project is financed through IPA 2007-2013 funds. **The buildings were completed and inaugurated in December 2015.**



The rest of the families will get housing assistance through the RHP, with the construction of 120 housing units. The construction works, due to start in January 2016, will enable 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.



Projects Approved



Projects Approved (December 2015)

| Project title | Ref. no Date of approval by RHP Assembly of Donors | Total estimated cost in EUR | Approved grant amount in EUR | Estimated national contribution in EUR | Amount disbursed in EUR |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | | | | | |
| 1 Provision of building materials to 20 families and reconstruction assistance to 150 families | BiH1 08/04/2013 | 2 316 000 | 2 035 000 | 281 000 | 716 250 |
| 2 Reconstruction of 750 and construction of 30 family houses | BiH2 11/10/2013 | 14 634 324 | 12 634 032 | 2 000 292 | 350 000 |
| 3 Construction of apartment buildings for 438 families | BiH3 20/11/2014 | 14 371 287 | 12 343 875 | 2 027 412 | |
| 4 Reconstruction of 435 and construction of 45 family houses | BiH4 26/03/2015 | 9 620 371 | 8 569 651 | 1 050 720 | |
| Sub-total | | 41 294 482 | 35 935 058 | 5 359 424 | 1 066 250 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Croatia | | | | | |
| 5 Construction of an apartment building in Korenica for 29 families | HR1 08/04/2013 | 1 398 211 | 1 048 658 | 349 553 | 943 792 |
| 6 Construction of apartment buildings in Knin for 40 families | HR2 11/10/2013 | 3 165 601 | 2 622 982 | 542 619 | 776 111 |
| 7 Reconstruction of a home for 75 elderly and disabled persons in Glina | HR3 11/10/2013 | 4 831 260 | 3 668 413 | 1 162 847 | 830 006 |
| 8 Purchase of 101 flats within and outside the Areas of Special State Concern | HR4 06/12/2013 | 5 717 140 | 4 287 855 | 1 429 285 | 1 863 198 |
| 9 Construction of an apartment building in Benkovac for 21 families | HR5 20/11/2014 | 1 375 732 | 1 023 421 | 352 311 | 269 078 |
| Sub-total | | 16 225 903 | 12 032 496 | 4 193 407 | 4 682 185 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Montenegro | | | | | |
| 10 Construction of two apartment buildings in Niksic for 62 I/DP families | MNE1 08/04/2013 | 2 580 000 | 1 980 000 | 600 000 | 594 000 |
| 11 Construction of two apartment buildings in Camp Konik 1 for 120 families | MNE2 11/10/2013 | 6 906 750 | 6 226 622 | 680 128 | 1 681 356 |
| 12 Construction of a home for 68 elderly/handicapped persons in Pljevlja | MNE3 11/10/2013 | 2 231 716 | 1 918 572 | 313 144 | 518 066 |
| 13 Construction of 94 apartments in the Municipality of Berane | MNE4 20/11/2014 | 3 990 647 | 3 575 780 | 414 867 | |
| Sub-total | | 15 709 113 | 13 700 974 | 2 008 139 | 3 697 914 |

Projects Approved



| Serbia | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 14 | Provision of 125 building materials and 66 pre-fab houses | SRB1 08/04/2013 | 2 212 500 | 1 993 000 | 219 500 | 996 500 |
| 15 | Support to 870 refugee families through - Construction of 200 apartments - Construction of 120 pre-fabricated houses - Provision of 300 building material packages - Purchase of 250 village houses | SRB2 11/10/2013 | 13 062 936 | 11 560 936 | 1 502 000 | 5 489 900 |
| 16 | Support to 715 refugee families through - Construction of 235 apartments - Construction of 80 pre-fabricated houses - Provision of 350 building material packages - Purchase of 50 village houses | SRB3 06/12/2013 | 13 642 918 | 10 963 918 | 2 679 000 | 2 402 500 |
| 17 | Support to 661 refugee families through - Construction of 261 apartments - Construction of 30 pre-fabricated houses - Provision of 300 building material packages - Purchase of 70 village houses | SRB4 23/06/2014 | 11 987 751 | 10 614 891 | 1 372 860 | 3 835 100 |
| 18 | Support to 1 712 refugee families through - Construction of 1 262 apartments - Provision of 250 building material packages - Purchase of 200 village houses | SRB5 20/11/2014 | 46 773 758 | 36 348 906 | 10 424 852 | |
| Sub-total | | | 87 679 863 | 71 481 651 | 16 198 212 | 12 724 000 |
| Total | | | 160 909 361 | 133 150 179 | 27 759 182 | 22 170 349 |





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.

www.regionalhousingprogramme.org
