



Regional
Housing
Programme

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Photo on the cover:
Start of construction works, Berane, Montenegro

Cover Story



FOUNDATION STONE LAID FOR 94 HOUSING UNITS IN BERANE, MONTENEGRO

On 7 April 2017, Kemal Purisic, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Dragoslav Scekcic, Mayor of Berane and Leslie Freriksen, representative of the U.S. Embassy in Montenegro, laid the foundation stone for the construction of 94 housing units to accommodate displaced persons in Berane.

The total cost of the project is estimated at EUR 4 million, out of which EUR 3.6 million will be financed from the RHP Fund resources. The works contract with the selected contractor was signed in December 2016 and the works should be completed in the first half of 2018.

Minister Purisic reminded that more than 1 500 housing solutions have already been provided to meet the needs of refugees through a number of projects funded by the Government of Montenegro, non-governmental organisations, international partners and donors.

Mayor Scekcic stressed that this project will enable 94 families that have decided to choose Berane as their home, to finally settle after 25 years of living in temporary and uncertain conditions. He added that the state must solve the issue of citizenship of displaced persons so as to enable their full integration into the community.

“Ensuring that essential housing needs are met will enable displaced persons and individuals to focus on other significant aspects of their lives, such as finding employment, integrating into cultural and economic life of the community and improving their lives, i.e. the lives of their families. As a donor, the U.S. wishes to find additional ways to support fulfilment of non-housing needs, since this is an excellent beginning, but it is not the only problem to be solved”, stated Ms Freriksen.

The ceremony was also attended by Igor Burazin, representative of the Council of Europe Development Bank, Dan Redford, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro and Roberta Montevicchi, UNHCR Representative in Montenegro.



BENEFICIARY STORY

Milovan Ojdanic (56) was born in Gorazde, Bosnia and Herzegovina. When the war started, he used to live in Sarajevo. He left with his parents to their country of origin, Montenegro, and came to Berane in 1992.

Since 1995, when Milovan met his wife with whom he got two sons, the family has been living in a collective centre in Berane. The family lived on the money Milan was earning by working as a carpenter. He fell ill two years ago and had to stop working, and since then, their sole source of income is support from the social services. The older son has finished high school and is now looking for a job. The younger son has been practising gymnastics for years, participating at competitions around the country. His father regrets not being able to afford sending his son to international competitions.

The Ojdanic family is one of the 94 refugee families which will get a permanent housing solution in one of the four buildings to be constructed in Berane. The construction works started in February 2017 and are expected to be finalised in June 2018.

Partner Countries' Highlights



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

RHP IMPLEMENTATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA PROGRESSING WELL

RHP Country Housing Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently being implemented through four on-going sub-projects – BiH1, BiH2, BiH3 and BiH4 - which will altogether provide new homes to close to 2 000 vulnerable families by the end of 2018 / early 2019. The final remaining works under BiH1 - delivery of 20 packages of building material and re/construction of destroyed and damaged houses for 150 returnee and IDP families - will be completed during the second half of 2017. As regards BiH2, following the completion of 30 family houses for refugees from Croatia, the remaining housing units under re/construction will be ready to accommodate 750 beneficiary families by the beginning of 2018.

2018 will also see the completion of most of the housing units under BiH3 and BiH4 sub-projects, where the re/construction works started in the first half of 2017: 512 flats will be completed in 24 multi-apartment buildings, and 480 family houses will be provided for RHP beneficiaries.

The Assembly of Donors of the RHP Fund approved in June 2017 a new sub-project for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH5), for a total grant amount of EUR 10.2 million, for the provision of 550 family houses for returnees and displaced persons. All this should allow, by the end of 2019, for some 2 500 most vulnerable families or some 9 000 persons to find durable and sustainable housing solutions after too many years in protracted displacement. The preparations of a new sub-project BiH6 have also started.



Construction works on the building in Prijedor, May 2017



BENEFICIARY STORY

Ljuban Strbac (53) left his hometown Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1995 and came to the village of Rakelici, near Prijedor, together with his parents. They fled in a convoy of refugees, leaving behind all that they had - a big, new house, completely equipped and furnished, and a small, additional one, made so that their friends and family could stay when they come to visit.

Upon their arrival in Rakelici, they were given temporary accommodation in the village cultural centre, and, after couple of weeks, the villagers gave the family a small, 30m2 abandoned house. Ljuban's mother died soon after their arrival; she couldn't accept the new, unbearable circumstances, Ljuban explained. His father got a 150 EUR/month pension, out of which the two men were living for years. When Ljuban's father died, a year ago, he was left without any income whatsoever.

Ljuban lives out of the occasional jobs he manages to find in the neighbourhood. He lives in a small, humid, two-room crumbling cottage, without water or electricity. He sleeps on a wooden bench covered with a tiny piece of sponge, brings water from the well near the house, and washes in the half-ruined stable. As he was unable to pay the electricity bills, it was cut off. His neighbours are still helping him whenever they can. When he heard about the possibility to get an apartment in the RHP building in Prijedor, his hopes revived: "I only wish I could sleep in a proper bed, have a stove and a bathroom. Nothing else, I would be satisfied with these few basic things."

Partner Countries' Highlights



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

HOME FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED PERSONS IN GLINA HANDED OVER

On 5 June 2017, Ivo Zinic, Sisak-Moslavina County Prefect and Nikola Mazar, Head of the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, signed the Agreement on the Rights and Obligations of the Home for the elderly and disabled persons in Glina, thus marking a ceremonial handover of the Home. The cost for reconstruction and extension of the home amounted to EUR 4.2 million, whereas the cost of furnishing was EUR 370 000.

The Home for the elderly and disabled persons in Glina, which is to accommodate 75 persons, is constructed as a durable housing solution for refugees, returnees and displaced persons currently residing in organized accommodation facilities, as well as for other returnees incapable of independent living. The founder of the Home is the Sisak-Moslavina County, whereas the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care was in charge of its construction and equipping, as well as of the selection of beneficiaries. The Home should become operational by the end of the year, following the recruitment of 39 employees.



Home for elderly and disabled persons in Glina, June 2017

CONSTRUCTION OF 40 APARTMENTS IN KNIN COMPLETED

The construction works on two apartment buildings, each with 20 housing units, are completed. The technical acceptance was given on 6 July, after which the 40 beneficiary families will be able to move in. The future residents are former tenancy right holders, the majority of whom live in other countries in the region and some are still currently living in collective accommodation in the nearby village of Golubic. Others are living in the area under inadequate housing conditions or with relatives.

CONSTRUCTION OF 21 APARTMENTS IN BENKOVAC TO BE FINISHED IN A FEW WEEKS

The construction works on an apartment building with 21 housing units are nearly completed. The future residents are former tenancy right holders, many of them living in refuge in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Montenegro, as well as refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who are in the process of local integration in Benkovac.



BENEFICIARY STORY

Before the war, Ana (66) and Fabijan (62) Tokmakcija were living in Kakanj, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in their family house. In June 1993, the three-member family fled to Vares in BiH. Soon after, Ana, with her son Blazenko (40), were evacuated and resettled in an organized accommodation for refugees and displaced persons in Novigrad, Croatia. Fabijan re-united with his family in December 1993 and they settled down in Knin.

Since their arrival, they have been living in rented accommodation, switching and renting apartments below basic living standards. For the past couple of years, they have been accommodated in an apartment located in an old and ruined building, abandoned by all other tenants. The building is without elevator so they have to climb up 25 stairs to get to their apartment. This is, beside the inadequate condition of the apartment and the building, the main obstacle for a normal decent living, especially for their disabled son Blazenko.

In 2006, Blazenko was diagnosed with multiple-sclerosis. At that time, he was still working but due to the progress of his illness, he retired in 2010. Blazenko receives a disability pension from the Croatian Pension Fund and supplementary benefit for nursing and care from the Centre for Social Welfare. Blazenko leaves the apartment only when going to regular medical check-ups and treatments, and he has to be carried in/out by medical staff, otherwise he remains imprisoned in his room. The whole family is looking forward to the new apartment in one of the two RHP buildings being constructed in Knin – they should move in at the beginning of this autumn.

Partner Countries' Highlights



MONTENEGRO

CONSTRUCTION OF 51 ADDITIONAL APARTMENTS STARTED IN KONIK CAMP, PODGORICA

An inauguration event to mark the beginning of the construction works on 51 apartments took place on 18 May 2017 at the newly opened construction site in Konik, near Podgorica. The apartments are expected to be finalised in the second half of 2018. These 51 apartments come in addition to further 120 apartments at the same location, which are already under construction and which shall be handed over this autumn to RHP beneficiary families currently residing in the Konik settlement.

Kemal Purisic, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro, stated: "By providing housing to the most vulnerable internally displaced and refugees, we help them become part of our society. All those who chose Montenegro as their new home are welcome to stay and we will do all that is in our power to help them integrate. This project is a very good example of those efforts and a great success of the RHP in Montenegro."

CEB's Vice Governor Rosa María Sánchez-Yebra Alonso highlighted the joint cooperation and synergy between the RHP stakeholders which has made this project possible, in addition to other RHP projects in the four Partner Countries which have so far enabled over 3 000 persons to receive durable housing solutions.

This RHP project complements an earlier action financed by the European Commission through IPA funds, where 48 apartments were delivered to vulnerable Konik residents in autumn 2015. Together with the IPA-financed apartments, the RHP project should contribute to the definite closure of the Konik settlement.



Anne-Christine Eriksson, UNHCR Regional Representative for South Eastern Europe, said that UNHCR was pleased to have contributed, together with partners, to the successful realization of the RHP, including the selection of beneficiaries, adding that "the work of finding solutions for those displaced still in need is not over in Montenegro".

Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro Maryse Daviet commended the authorities for their leadership in this important project and for their excellent co-operation with all partners involved. "It is their hard work in the implementation of the RHP that is making a difference in the lives of these vulnerable families."

"We can clearly see the importance of these works by looking at and comparing the living conditions on our left, where the new IPA-funded buildings stand, and on our right, where containers and barracks have so far hosted vulnerable individuals. However, we must not forget the other needs of this population, both social and economic, and we will do our best to help them access education, work, health services, etc." said Mr Christian Danielsson, Director General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIAN DANIELSSON, DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS, EUROPEAN COMMISSION KONIK, PODGORICA, 18 MAY 2017



Why is RHP important for the EU?

This programme is essential as it is addressing a legacy of the past, terrible experiences for individuals, many of them still living in collective centres. Without housing, you cannot deal with other difficulties faced in life.

Housing combined with social integration measures and economic opportunities will create a better future for all those families who will live in the houses for which we laid the foundation stone today, as well as for all those who are already living in new homes as a result of this programme.

We should not compare RHP with the inflow of migrants that we are facing in Europe today: this is about Western Balkans, it is about seeing that those people that suffered as a result of the war in the 1990s and were displaced get a future in which they can live under acceptable conditions and recreate their lives under new circumstances.

Partner Countries' Highlights



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

DELIVERY OF BUILDING MATERIAL PACKAGES UNDER SRB2 STARTED IN 28 MUNICIPALITIES

A ceremony was held on 23 May 2017 in Srbobran, Serbia, to mark the start of delivery and installation of building material packages for refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia under the RHP sub-project SRB2. The delivery and installation of building material packages under this sub-project has started in 28 local self-government units across Serbia, which will enable a total of 319 refugee families to receive RHP assistance.

In total, SRB2 amounts to over EUR 13 million and will enable the delivery of 900 housing solutions through four different modalities: delivery of building material packages (249 financed by the RHP Fund and 70 by the contribution of the Republic of Serbia); purchase of village houses (250), construction of apartments (200) and construction of pre-fabricated houses (120).

The ceremony took place at the house of the Pavlovic family in Srbobran.

In 1995, Dejan Pavlovic (36) fled from Dalj in the vicinity of Vukovar with his father Mihajlo, mother Dobrinka and brother Marko. Immediately after arriving in Serbia, the family took shelter at a relative's house near Becej and, later on, the parents bought a small house in Srbobran. Dejan works as a technician and is married to Slavica (31) with whom he has three daughters: Jovana (12), Dunja (5) and Dejana (3). He bought the house where they live nine years ago. The rammed earth house was in a very bad condition, but, little by little, the family managed to make it habitable. Thanks to the RHP, the Pavlovic family received a building material package worth EUR 9 000, which is now being used to refurbish the roof, chimney, gutters, part of the façade, woodworks, hydro isolation, floors, ceilings and the bathroom.



On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, the ceremony was attended by Mr Ivica Dacic, Acting Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Commission for Coordination of Permanent Integration of Refugees. The event was also attended by several Ambassadors of the RHP Donor countries, a number of local high level officials as well as representatives of international RHP stakeholders.



"For several months now, I have participated in similar events in the capacity of the Chairman of the Commission for Coordination of Permanent Integration of Refugees, which demonstrates the commitment and intensity of implementation activities of the Regional Housing Programme in the Republic of Serbia. Over this short period, in the previous two months only, I laid the foundation stone for the construction of apartments in Vrsac, Paracin, Prokuplje, Krusevac and Sremska Mitrovica. I always try to respond to each invitation from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and it is with pride and unconcealed pleasure that I may say that the Programme is in its full swing across Serbia", said Minister Dacic.

Regional Activities

10th RHP STEERING COMMITTEE HELD IN BELGRADE, SERBIA



The 10th meeting of the RHP Steering Committee and the 14th meeting of the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors took place on 26 June in Belgrade, at the Palace of Serbia.

The meetings were followed by a press conference and attended by the representatives of the RHP Partner Countries, Donors (EU, U.S.A, Italy, Germany and Switzerland) and the RHP implementing partners UNHCR, OSCE and the CEB.

The Steering Committee meeting was opened by the Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Mr Ivica Dacic and by the Minister in charge of EU Integration Ms Jadranka Joksimovic. The Acting Head of the EU Delegation in Belgrade Mr Oskar Benedikt, the U.S. Ambassador HE Mr Kyle Scott as well as the Ambassador of Germany HE Mr Axel Dittmann also addressed the participants.

The Steering Committee welcomed the decision of the Assembly of Donors to approve **two new sub-projects for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, worth in total EUR 31 million**. It was further concluded that the RHP is making good progress in all Partner Countries, with over 1 100 housing solutions already delivered to the beneficiaries. 2017 will be a key year as over 2 000 supplementary housing units are scheduled to be completed by year-end. The Partner Countries confirmed their strong commitment to the RHP and their focused effort to provide durable housing solutions to the most vulnerable remaining refugees. This commitment underlines the regional spirit and positive effect that the Programme has on the neighbourly relations.

All stakeholders acknowledged the regional and reconciliatory dimension as being one of the key results of the RHP up to date.

The Acting Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia Oskar Benedikt reminded that the EU is the largest RHP Donor with a pledge of EUR 232 million. He stated that the RHP is an embodiment of the core European values of cooperation, reconciliation and solidarity and added that it is important to provide assistance in all possible ways, so as to heal the wounds and help those most in need.



RHP donors and partners visit beneficiary family in Pancevo, Serbia

A day after the Steering Committee meeting, the 1000th RHP housing solution in Serbia was delivered to a beneficiary family in Pancevo, Serbia. The keys of the house were handed over to the Gnjatovic Maric family by Mr Ivica Dacic, Acting Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Commission for Coordination of Permanent Integration of Refugees.

Milosava Maric fled from Kljuc, Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sombor, Serbia with her family in the nineties. There she met Petar Gnjatovic, who moved to Sombor from Rijeka, Croatia. They moved in together and had three children. They lived in Sombor until 2014 and, as the children were growing up, they decided to move to Pancevo to be closer to the City of Belgrade where Petar has more opportunities for work. Since then, they have moved from one apartment to another. They lived in very simple apartments, as they did not look for a nice apartment but for a cheap one.

In 2017, they received a pre-fabricated house in Pancevo through the RHP and now Anja, Sanja and Stefan will have their own rooms. They plan to throw a party once they have moved in, or at least a sleepover, said the children with big smiles on their faces.

Regional Activities

20th REGIONAL COORDINATION FORUM HELD IN SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



On 26 April 2017, the 20th RHP Regional Coordination Forum took place in Sarajevo. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants to the Forum included representatives of the four Partner Countries, Donors, CEB, UNHCR and OSCE. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina Semiha Borovac who expressed her satisfaction with the current pace of RHP implementation. She underlined RHP's important human dimension and its role as a facilitator to the Partner Countries' EU integration.

The meeting focused on taking stock of the latest progress: close to 1 100 housing units have been delivered to date and some 2 000 vulnerable families will be gaining access to decent housing in 2017. In Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, close to 1 000 new RHP housing units should be completed in 2017.

The participants to the meeting agreed that while the primary objective of the RHP remains the delivery of keys, the RHP is also a programme that seeks to provide sustainable solutions in terms of infrastructure, economic, social and cultural aspects. The Partner Countries presented the steps taken until now and future plans necessary to secure the integration and self-sufficiency of the beneficiaries.

Following the meeting, a joint site visit to Zenica was organised where the construction works on 62 apartments were launched last November, with planned completion in early 2018. The participants also visited family Mekic in Busovaca, who will receive turnkey reconstruction assistance to reconstruct their badly damaged home. In addition, the Catholic Relief Services has provided the family with support for income generating activities.



RHP in Media

RHP PRESENTATION ON CROATIAN NATIONAL TELEVISION

Mr Ivica Preskar from Croatia's Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care and Mr Neven Crvenkovic from the UNHCR were guests at the "Prizma" TV show in June 2017, presenting the results of the RHP and showing some inserts from the latest film on RHP implementation in Croatia.



ARTICLE ON RHP IN "DEUTSCHE WELLE"

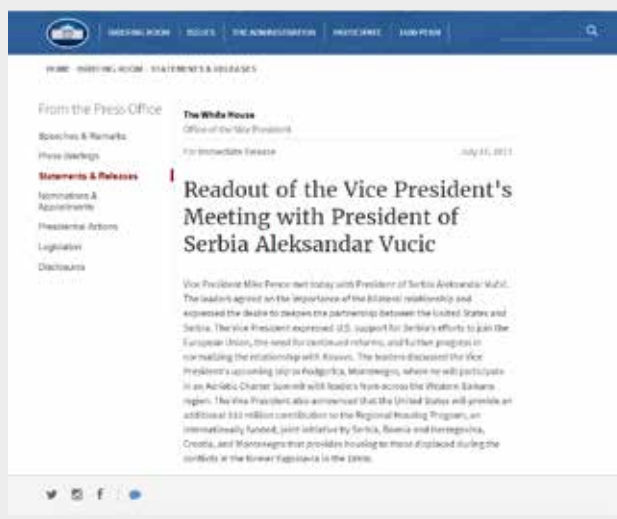
Following the visit of a Deutsche Welle journalist to Belgrade in June 2017 where he accompanied RHP stakeholders in the context of the Assembly of Donors/Steering Committee meetings, an article about the RHP was published on the Deutsche Welle website in Serbian, English and German.

A link to the article can be found here: [go to article](#)

ADDITIONAL \$10 MILLION FOR RHP FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In his meeting with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić on 17 July, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence announced that the United States will provide an additional \$10 million contribution for the Regional Housing Programme.

These new funds are of paramount importance for the RHP as they will enable the financing of hundreds of new housing solutions for the most vulnerable families in RHP Partner Countries.



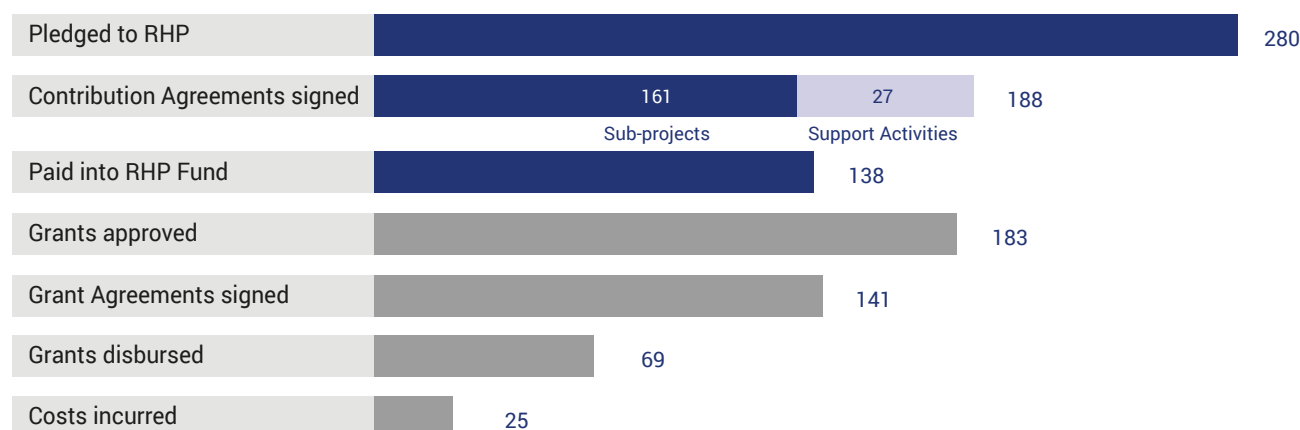
RHP Fund Status

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW OF THE RHP

At end-August 2017, the financial situation of the RHP can be summarised by the following figures:

Aggregate figures on RHP

(in EUR million, at end - June 2017)



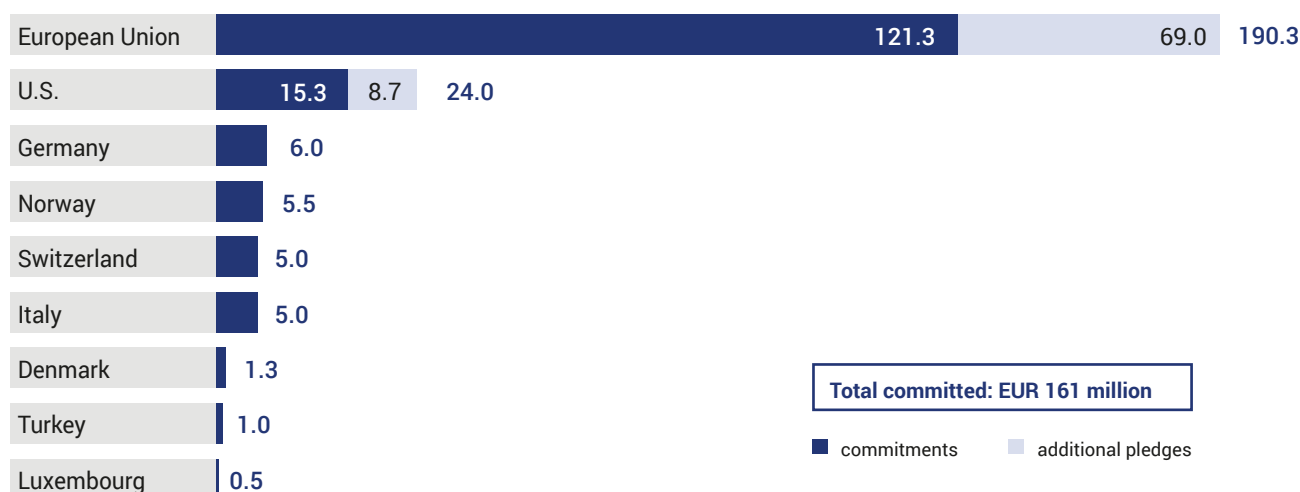
NEW CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONORS

At the last RHP Steering Committee meeting, held on 26 June 2017 in Belgrade, the U.S. pledged an additional USD 10 million to the RHP Fund. This pledge will bring the U.S. contribution to EUR 24 million, making the country the second largest RHP Donor after the European Union with EUR 232 million pledged to the Programme and EUR 121 million already committed to the RHP Fund.

In total, the Donors have committed EUR 161 million to the RHP Fund, as follows:

Contributions committed to the RHP Fund

(in EUR million, at end - August 2017)



DISBURSEMENTS TO PARTNER COUNTRIES

At end-August 2017, the total volume of disbursements since the start of the Programme amounted to EUR 69 million. Of this total amount, EUR 36 million, or 52%, were disbursed to Serbia, a figure that is in line with its share of the Programme. In effect, Serbia accounts for the majority of RHP grants approved so far, i.e. EUR 105 million out of EUR 183 million, or 57%.

Upcoming Activities (September - December 2017)

RHP Visibility Events

1 September 2017

Signature of agreements with beneficiaries for 302 building material packages (SRB3), Belgrade, Serbia

Second half of September 2017

Start of works on construction of residential buildings (SRB4), Serbia

Last week of September 2017

Completion of works on 120 housing units in Konik (MNE2), Podgorica, Montenegro

3 October 2017

21st Regional Coordination Forum and 16th Technical Committee, Zagreb, Croatia

4 October 2017

Completion of works on two residential buildings with 40 apartments (HR2), Knin, Croatia

Second half of October 2017

Completion of works on a home for 75 elderly and disabled persons (HR3), Glina, Croatia

Third week of October 2017

Delivery of keys for apartments in residential buildings to beneficiaries (BiH3), Foca-Ustikolina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

First half of November 2017

Completion of works on 235 apartments (SRB3), Ovca, Belgrade, Serbia

Mid November 2017

Completion of works on a residential building with 21 apartments (HR5), Benkovac, Croatia

Second half of November 2017

Start of works on renovation/reconstruction of 62 family houses (HR6), Croatia

Mid December 2017

Completion of works on home for 68 elderly/handicapped (MNE3), Pljevlja, Montenegro



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 (RHP) was set up to provide durable housing solutions to vulnerable refugees and displaced persons following the 1991-1995 conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. The RHP is implemented by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia and mostly financed by the international donor community. The main donor is the European Union.

The other donors are the United States of America, Germany, Norway, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Turkey, Luxembourg, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

www.regionalhousingprogramme.org
