



Regional
Housing
Programme

NEWSLETTER No.8

APRIL - JUNE 2016



Photo on the cover:
Delivery of keys, Niksic, Montenegro
June 2016

Cover Story



MONTENEGRO CELEBRATES TWO RHP MILESTONES

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro held two ceremonies on 20 June to mark the completion of 62 apartments in Niksic and the start of construction of a home for the elderly in Pljevlja.

The inauguration of the new apartment building in Niksic brought together RHP stakeholders and beneficiaries. The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mr Boris Maric, and the Mayor of Niksic, Mr Veselin Grbovic, handed over the keys to local families for immediate tenancy. These are the first housing solutions delivered within Montenegro, and are the result of a 12 month's work and EUR 2.6 million investment.



Mayor of Niksic, Veselin Grbovic stated: "The Municipality participated in this project by providing a 5000m² plot of land, all the infrastructure and an access road to the value of EUR 700 000. We have received significant support from the previous Minister Kovacevic, who was dedicated to implementing the project, and from the recently appointed new Minister, Mr Maric."

At the occasion, Minister Boris Maric said: "I would like to express my gratitude to all our partners from the international community, as well as local and national authorities for their joint efforts and commitment. This project is a good example of social inclusion and economic sustainability, providing housing solutions and a new life to the most vulnerable categories of IDPs who decided to stay in Montenegro and become an equal part of our society."

The commencement of building works in Pljevlja sees the start of a EUR 2.2 million project, of which EUR 1.9 million (86%) is covered by RHP Fund resources. It will provide a much needed home for 68 elderly and handicapped refugees/IDPs with permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro and will also provide daily care to an additional 30 people.

The Mayor of Pljevlja, Mirko Djacic, stressed the importance of this project in the field of social policy and highlighted the Municipality of Pljevlja's contribution to the project by providing a good plot of land for the beneficiaries.

Newsflash

RHP ACTIVITIES WELL UNDER WAY

The four Partner Countries will continue to push on with construction works through this summer and autumn, with over 1 800 beneficiary families selected and numerous tenders launched and / or completed. Within the first five months of 2016, RHP implementation accelerated considerably and present activities are set to create new homes for thousands of vulnerable people. At the current pace, the number of housing units delivered this year is expected to be triple that of 2015.



Beneficiary family in Olovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Beneficiary selection in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is well advanced for all sub-projects, as is the delivery of building material packages and reconstruction of houses. Twenty housing units have already been provided and close to 1 000 beneficiaries are expected to move into their new houses by late 2016. The latest RHP Steering Committee meeting in Sarajevo also presented RHP Donors and other stakeholders with an opportunity to visit some RHP beneficiaries in Novo Gorazde.



Progress of works in Konik Camp, Montenegro

Montenegro is moving forward with RHP construction projects in three main towns – Niksic, Konik and Pljevlja. In Niksic, the construction of two apartment buildings to accommodate 62 vulnerable families was finished in May and the flats were handed over in June. The construction of 120 apartments in Konik Camp was launched in March 2016, with an estimated completion date within the 2nd half of 2017, while the inauguration of the construction site in Pljevlja was officially marked at the end of June.



Progress of works in Glina, Croatia

In **Croatia**, after the successful completion of the project in Korenica, three more construction sites are now active in Glina (reconstruction of a home for 75 elderly and disabled persons), Knin (construction of two residential buildings with 40 apartments) and Benkovac (construction of an apartment building for 21 families). Furthermore, Croatia has already purchased 58 apartments under the project HR4, targeting the purchase of flats for 101 beneficiary households. As of today, 87 housing units have been provided to beneficiaries in Croatia, and another 50 are expected to be completed by the end of the year.



Pre-fab house in Simanovci, Serbia

Serbia has made progress in delivery of two housing modalities in particular: distribution of packages of building materials and construction of prefabricated houses. Since 2015, 129 packages of building materials have been distributed to selected refugee families in Serbia and their installation is to a large extent completed. The delivery and installation of 66 pre-fabricated houses to the benefit of almost 200 people will be finalised this autumn. The construction works on 235 apartments will start in Ovca, Belgrade, this summer. This is one of several RHP projects that will be implemented in the Serbian capital, where the RHP investments are expected to amount to EUR 18.5 million, providing housing for 2 700 people. Furthermore, important construction projects will be launched in different municipalities across the country.

Partner Countries' Highlights



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

FIRST BENEFICIARY FAMILIES MOVE INTO NEW HOMES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

On 12 April, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) organised a site visit to Olovo to celebrate an important event, namely the return of the first internally displaced families into their newly (re)constructed houses. The Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, Ms Semiha Borovac and Mr Edin Ramic, Minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Federation of BiH, together with several RHP Donors, personally handed over the keys to the first seven families selected to benefit from the **BiH1 project - Provision of building materials to 20 families and turnkey reconstruction assistance to 150 families.**

The ceremony was attended by a number of representatives from the Donor community, including Ambassador Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, Head of EU Delegation to BiH, as well as a large number of high level representatives from the Embassies of the U.S, Italy, Switzerland, Romania and Turkey. RHP partners UNHCR, OSCE and the CEB were also present as well as senior representatives of the Lead Institutions of RHP Partner Countries Croatia and Serbia.

"We are all glad to witness today the result of a long process, which has finally reached this final phase of delivery of keys to the selected beneficiaries. I am especially pleased that this is happening in Olovo, a municipality which has suffered a lot during the war. I would like to thank all our partners from the other three RHP Partner Countries who helped us in the key process of verification of beneficiaries. The RHP represents the best example of regional cooperation, leading to renewal of mutual collaboration and reconciliation amongst the countries", stated Semiha Borovac, Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



SIX FAMILIES IN NOVO GORAZDE MOVE INTO NEW HOMES

On 29 June 2016, the RHP Steering Committee members visited the town of Novo Gorazde to hand over the keys to reconstructed houses to six beneficiary families. These are the first families in Republika Srpska to have received housing assistance through the RHP. In total, 25 families in Foca and Novo Gorazde will receive housing solutions during this summer, within the scope of the first BiH project.

In addition to the Minister of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH Semiha Borovac, the ceremony was attended by the Minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons of Republika Srpska Mr Davor Cordas as well as RHP's main donors and other stakeholders. Minister Cordas expressed his satisfaction that the RHP is now giving concrete results and stressed that the implementation needs to accelerate in order to finish what was planned.

Morten Jung, Head of Unit, DG Near, European Commission, said that he was very proud to be among the group of equal partners who support the RHP and highlighted the importance of the close cooperation developed among the four Partner Countries.

The RHP stakeholders visited the house of the six-member family Zivojevic, which lived in exile until 2002 when they returned to their ruined house. After many years' wait for reconstruction assistance, they were finally selected under the RHP. The reconstruction works - covering complete refurbishment of the first floor with exterior insulation works and complete replacement of the roof - were completed on 20 June 2016, thus coinciding with the World Refugee Day.

Partner Countries' Highlights



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

CONSTRUCTION OF 21 APARTMENTS STARTED IN BENKOVAC

On 4 April 2016, the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care organised an inauguration ceremony on the construction site in Benkovac, to celebrate the start of works on a **21 apartment residential building under HR5 project**.

The apartments will be inhabited by families with former tenancy rights and families from Bosnia and Herzegovina, most of whom had a refugee status in Croatia. The total cost of the project is estimated at EUR 1.3 million, of which EUR 1 million will be covered from the RHP Fund resources. The project is due for completion in the second half of 2017.

Mr Tomislav Tolusic, Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds, said: "I wish to thank the RHP for bringing new hope to refugee families in Croatia. I would also like to thank the city of Benkovac, which provided the land plot and the infrastructure."

In addition to the new Head of the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care Mr Nikola Mazar, the event was attended by Deputy Minister of Social Policy and Youth Mr Ante Babic, Deputy Prefect of Zadar County Mr Rudolf Dvorski, Mayor of Benkovac Mr Branko Kutija and the Political Counsellor at the US Embassy Mr Eric Williams. Representatives of UNHCR were also in attendance.

"Our mission is to secure a decent life to former refugees in Croatia, to whom we feel responsible as a government, and foremost as people to people. Therefore, such projects should not stop. My engagement through the State Office is even greater, as I have a personal experience of living as a refugee", stated Nikola Mazar, Head of State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care.



WORKSHOP FOR THE NETWORK OF FIELD ASSOCIATES - CROSS BORDER VERIFICATION

On 11 April a workshop for the network of field associates was organized by UNHCR and State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care in Zagreb. This workshop was devised to introduce the newly selected associates to the methodology and operational part of cross-border verification. The newly selected associates will verify the data of potential beneficiaries who applied for RHP housing solutions in BiH and currently live in Croatia. According to the Memorandum of Understanding between BiH and Croatia, more than 3 500 potential beneficiaries need to be verified in the next few months. The event was also attended by representatives from the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH.



MONTENEGRO

WORKS IN KONIK CAMP PROGRESSING

The construction works on 12 buildings to accommodate 120 most vulnerable families in Konik camp started on 23 March 2016 and are already progressing very well - the project should be finalised in the second half of 2017, as planned. The total cost of the project is close to EUR 7 million, 90% of which will be covered by the RHP Fund and the remaining 10% by a national contribution. The apartments will be inhabited by the most vulnerable Roma families from Camp Konik 1 who are holders of status of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Kosovo or holders of status of foreigner with permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro.

The RHP project in Camp Konik 1 is part of a wider strategy for closing of Camp Konik, together with the construction of 48 apartments financed by the EU through IPA funds, completed last year. Following the successful completion of the construction works in Niksic, providing home to 62 vulnerable families, this is the second RHP project being successfully implemented in Montenegro.

Partner Countries' Highlights



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

CONTRACTS TO PURCHASE 69 VILLAGE HOUSES SIGNED WITH BENEFICIARIES IN BELGRADE



A ceremony to mark the hand over of house purchasing contracts to 69 refugee families took place on 27 June at the Belgrade City Hall. These houses are financed under RHP project **SRB3 - Support to 715 refugee families in Belgrade**.

Mr Ivica Dacic, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and President of the Commission for Coordination of Permanent Refugee Integration of the Government of Serbia, acknowledged that this was the second event in less than four months signalling the increased pace of RHP implementation. He also stressed Serbia's commitment to the RHP and stated: "The importance of this Programme goes beyond our countries' borders and proves that regional cooperation and reconciliation can bring solutions to long-term refugee problem in our region."

The Minister without portfolio in charge of European Integration, Ms Jadranka Joksimovic, expressed her gratitude to "all our donors and partners, who have proved once again that they are willing to provide not only political but also financial support in order to help us bring an end to one of the most difficult periods in our recent history."

The Commissioner for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia Mr Vladimir Cucic noted that behind the RHP, "there is an army of invisible people consisting of 122 municipalities and 170 working commissions. In addition, thousands of architects, engineers, lawyers, all have put a great effort into providing these people with houses. I would like to thank them also, in addition to RHP donors and international and local partners involved in the implementation of these projects."

"Today is a joyful day for 69 families - after more than 2 decades, they will put an end to waiting and insecurity. We would like to invite our partners to prepare and submit good and mature projects in order to use the funds still available within RHP and help those people finally settle in new homes", said Oskar Benedict, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia. He added that the EU is the biggest donor to the RHP, with EUR 230 million pledged to the RHP Fund.



Mr Gordon Duguid, Deputy Head of Mission at the US Embassy, Mr Hans Friedrich Schodder, UNHCR Representative in Serbia, Mr Michael Uyehara, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Mr Dragan Ivkovic, UPI representative and Mr Igor Burazin from the CEB were also present.

RHP Fund Status

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW OF THE RHP

At end-June 2016, the financial situation of the RHP can be summarized by the following figures:

Pledged to RHP		268
Contribution Agreements signed	159 Sub-projects	27 TA, CEB & PC operating cost
Paid into RHP Fund	120	186
Grants approved		141
Grant Agreements signed		133
Grants disbursed	43	

CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONORS

RHP Donors have committed EUR 159.4 million, of which they have paid in EUR 120.3 million. With EUR 121 million committed and EUR 84.2 million paid in, the European Union is the main Donor to the RHP.

TWO ADDITIONAL GRANT APPROVALS

In April, the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors approved two new grant requests by written procedure, totalling EUR 8.0 million:

- EUR 2.0 million for HR6 (Renovation, reconstruction or construction of 62 family houses in Croatia)
- EUR 6.0 million for SRB4 extension (Support to 1 233 refugee families in Serbia)

The total amount of grants approved now stands at EUR 141.2 million.

DISBURSEMENTS TO PARTNER COUNTRIES

- **EUR 0.8 million in favour of MNE4** - Construction of 94 apartments in municipality of Berane: on 9 May, the first grant tranche was paid out of the RHP Fund.
- **EUR 1.3 million in favour of HR2** - Construction of two residential buildings in Knin for 40 families: on 8 June, the second grant tranche was disbursed.
- **EUR 0.4 million in favour of HR4** - Purchase of flats for 101 eligible beneficiaries: on 20 June, the third grant tranche was paid out of the RHP Fund.
- **EUR 1.4 million in favour of BiH1** - Provision of building material to 20 families and turnkey reconstruction assistance to 150 families: on 23 June, the second grant tranche was disbursed.

These four disbursements bring the total amount paid out from the RHP Fund in favour of housing projects to EUR 43.0 million.

Regional Activities

8TH RHP STEERING COMMITTEE AND 12TH RHP FUND ASSEMBLY OF DONORS HELD IN SARAJEVO



The 8th meeting of the RHP Steering Committee and the 12th meeting of the RHP Fund Assembly of Donors took place on 28 June in Sarajevo, BiH.

Four years after the Donors' conference which launched the RHP, all stakeholders gathered again in Sarajevo to take stock of what has been achieved and what remains to be done. The meeting was attended by RHP Partner Countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, RHP Donors EU, U.S.A, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Norway and Turkey, as well as the implementing partners UNHCR, OSCE and the CEB.

The Partner Countries presented their achievements to date and together highlighted the spirit of cooperation that has resulted among other things from cross-border work within the RHP framework.

The stakeholders also acknowledged that 2015 and 2016 have been crucial years, witnessing the delivery of hundreds of housing units to beneficiaries in all Partner Countries. Moreover, within the first six months of 2016, the pace of funds' disbursement has doubled in comparison to the previous year. Each of the Partner Countries stressed that RHP necessitates the full participation of all four countries to maintain the pace of implementation.

Head of the EU Delegation to BiH and EU Special Representative, Ambassador Lars-Gunnar Wigemark welcomed the efforts and commitment of all the parties of the RHP and said that a lot of work has been done, but the work is not finished. "Significant challenges remain to be addressed, including selection of beneficiaries, providing durable housing solutions, as well as lack of economic opportunity as one of the biggest obstacles for sustainable return," Ambassador Wigemark said.

"Four years after the Donors' conference, the RHP Steering Committee meeting is again taking place in Sarajevo. I am very glad that this time around we can talk about results and meet with beneficiaries who have moved into their new homes. We have established close cooperation with all our colleagues in the region. It is important to emphasise that the RHP is not only beneficial for displaced populations but also for the entire region, as it contributes to stability and fosters good neighbourly relations", stated Semiha Borovac, Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH.



RHP Visibility

2015 was the first year in which the RHP delivered housing solutions to eligible beneficiaries in larger numbers. All in all, more than 200 families moved in to new homes after 20 years of displacement and dire living conditions. And many more families will follow.

Main achievements		
	Up to December 2015	January to May 2016
Housing units completed	More than 200	More than 100
Multi-apartment building sites inaugurated	3 (Niksic, Glina, Knin)	3 (Konik, Pljevlja, Benkovac)
Contracts signed between Partner Countries and contractors	39 for a total value of EUR 9.6 million	27 for a total value of EUR 8.3 million
Disbursements from RHP Fund to Partner Countries	EUR 17 million	EUR 18 million
2 more grant requests approved in favour of Croatia and Serbia for a total grant amount of EUR 8.0 million		
Total grant amount approved EUR 141 million		

All major activities were documented by RHP’s Visibility and Communication team (CEB and the Technical Assistance team) which promoted RHP achievements to diverse target groups, such as donor community and regional media, through an integrated set of communication tools - publications, films and photography.

In May and June 2016, several publications were issued:



RHP Fund Annual Report 2015
[View PDF](#)



RHP Highlights 2015 - 2016
[View PDF](#)



RHP Regional Factsheet
[View PDF](#)



Bosnia and Herzegovina
[View PDF](#)



Croatia
[View PDF](#)



Montenegro
[View PDF](#)



Serbia
[View PDF](#)

RHP Visibility

During the last three months, two additional RHP films were produced. They were first presented at the RHP Steering Committee meeting on 28 June in Sarajevo, and are now available on the RHP YouTube channel:

RHP Regional film
2015 - 2016

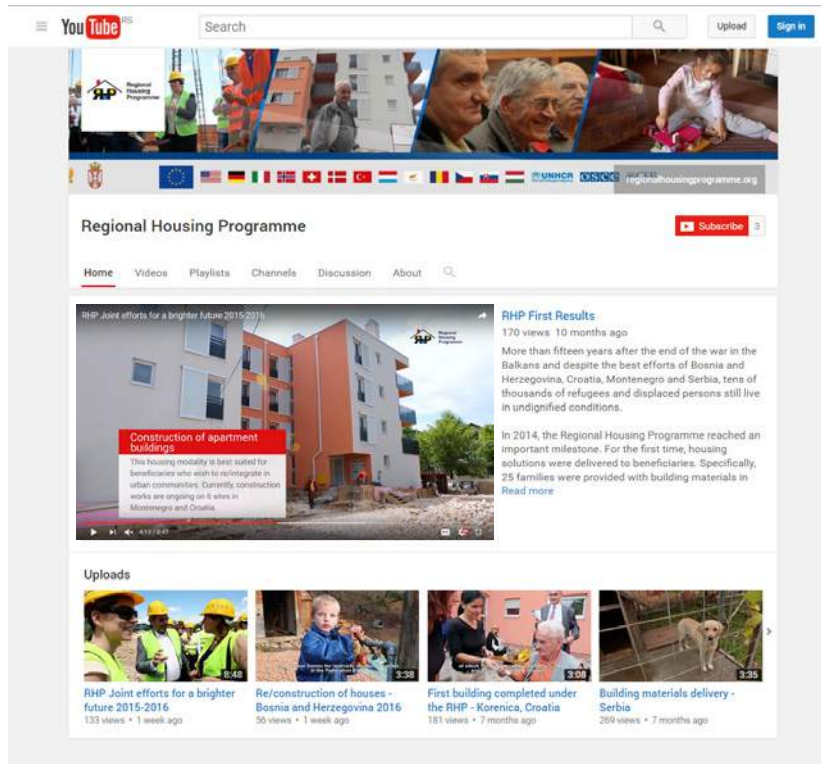


[watch movie](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina:
short film on re-construction of houses 2015 - 2016



[watch movie](#)



[watch movie](#)

RHP People

Mr Andrew Mayne, UNHCR's Regional Representative for South-Eastern Europe, based in Sarajevo, retired from service as of 30 June 2016, after over 30 years spent with UNHCR helping displaced people in different parts of the world.

Prior to his appointment in BiH, Mr Mayne served at the UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, and in Sierra Leone during the repatriation of Liberian refugees and local integration of Sierra Leonean returnees. During 1990's he was in charge for coordinating UNHCR's support to the development of asylum systems in five central European countries during their EU accession process, as well as for bringing durable solutions to protracted refugee situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and Pakistan.

Mr Mayne was also senior UNHCR representative for the RHP, participating in the work of Programme's different fora and bodies, including the Steering Committee.



"The RHP is not only about building houses, it is also about ensuring that the people in need have safe and reliable access to rights, services and livelihoods. And local authorities have a very important role to play in securing the sustainability of solutions for those who have returned, for those who have not been able to return yet, but also for those beneficiaries who choose to settle in their places of displacement.", said Mr Mayne.

After almost four years at the CEB, **Ms Virginia Tortella**, RHP Secretariat Manager, left the RHP Secretariat in July, to take on new challenges in the U.S. Ms Tortella joined the then newly-established RHP team at the CEB in October 2012. She has been a highly appreciated member of the team and has contributed to the RHP in a wide range of areas, in particular in the field of visibility and communication.

On behalf of all RHP stakeholders, we would like to wish the best of success to both colleagues, whose strong engagement has contributed to making the RHP what it is today.



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 offer durable housing to vulnerable individuals who became refugees or displaced persons following the 1991-1995 conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. RHP is implemented by Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia and mostly financed by the international donor community. The main donor is the European Union. The other donors are the USA, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Turkey, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary.

www.regionalhousingprogramme.org
