



Address by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic at the ceremony of the official handover of the keys to apartments for refugees in Vršac as part of the Regional Housing Program in the Republic of Serbia:

"Dear guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to address you here today, at such an important time in your lives. Today, we will hand over the keys to 20 apartments for refugee families who fled their homes more than 20 years ago in order to save their lives and find refuge in Serbia. The families in question came from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia at the time of the greatest suffering and persecution of the Serbian people in recent history.

{youtube}MDoRjm15H5g{/youtube}

The Regional Housing Program is realized in the countries of the region and includes 4 types of housing solutions. Apartments in Vršac were built within the Subproject 2. Forty refugee families have moved into apartments in Sremska Mitrovica within this Subproject. It is planned that another 40 apartments will be built in Vrsac on the location right behind this building, within Subproject 8.

Subproject 2 is worth EUR 13 million, of which EUR 11.5 million is a share of the Regional Housing Fund managed by the Council of Europe Development Bank, while EUR 1.5 million is a share of the Republic of Serbia. The donation for Vršac amounts to EUR 421,057, with the city of Vršac providing infrastructure worth 11.5 million dinars.

The largest donor of the Regional Housing Program is the European Union. That is why I warmly welcome Ms. Leoneta Pajer, representative of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, who is with us today. Also, Mr. Hans Schoder, our dear friend, Head of the UNHCR Representative Office in Serbia, the institution that, along with the OSCE, oversees the process of selecting the beneficiaries of the Regional Housing Program, is with us here today. I take this opportunity too to welcome Mr. Vladimir Cucic, Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, with whom I have an increasingly more frequent opportunity, to my great satisfaction, to hand over

the keys to our compatriots for their new homes.

Last Saturday we were in Ub. On 20 June, World Refugee Day, we handed over the keys for 270 families. Before that we were in Negotin, Kladovo, and Loznica, and we will continue with the same enthusiasm, since we have only been a slightly more than halfway through, i.e. out of 7,000 housing solutions under this Program, we have delivered 3,568 apartments with today's ceremony.

I am very pleased that our host today is our dear Dragana Mitrovic, Mayor of Vrsac. Like other representatives of local governments, she provided, together with her colleagues, ancillary infrastructure for the construction of these housing units. It is also necessary to point out that the technical part of the implementation of the Regional Housing Program is handled by the "Public Sector Projects Unit", headed by Mr. Dragan Katuca.

Dear friends, I wish you a lot of luck in your new homes. As I have said before, your suffering is deep and certainly something you can never forget. We all share and bear the burden of past times. We must be unified both in happiness and pain, because only in this way can we build a secure future for all of our children and their offspring. Here today I can say with full responsibility that the Government of the Republic of Serbia is devotedly working to that end.

Thank you."

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