



Following is the speech delivered by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic in Ub , at the ceremony marking the presentation of 20 sets of keys to refugee families from the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, in the context of the Regional Housing Programme (RHP) implementation in the Republic of Serbia:

"Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

We have gathered here today to officially present keys to 20 apartments intended for the refugee families from the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The apartments will be permanent homes for 60 beneficiaries.

The funds for the construction of the twenty apartments at 2 Slobodana Penezica Krcuna Street partly come from the RHP Fund and partly from the Ub Municipality budget. The Regional Housing Programme Fund has donated EUR 415,690, while the Municipality of Ub donated RSD 14 million.

Serbia is working committedly to assist and provide for all refugees from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Regional Housing Programme in Serbia has provided funds to meet the housing needs for more than 7,000 refugee families. So far, 3,528 refugee families have been secured in the context of the programme. Construction works have been performed on more than 40 locations.

The Regional Housing Programme is funded through donations, the single largest donor being the European Union. The RHP Fund is managed by the Council of Europe Development Bank. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is the leading institution implementing the programme in Serbia. In collaboration with local governments and with the monitoring of UNHCR and OSCE, the Commissariat is shortlisting the beneficiaries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and convey my special greetings to our host in Ub, President of the Municipality Mr. Darko Glisic, who has secured a portion of the funds, the land and the accompanying infrastructure for the project, together with his associates. My gratitude also goes to our guests and most important associates – H.E. Sem Fabrizi, Ambassador and

Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia and Deputy Head of Mission Joseph Mellott. My special gratitude goes to Mr. Vladimir Cucic, Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, who is working hard as the leader of the entire programme. In the same spirit, I would like to announce our soon meetings in Vrsac, Bajina Basta, Kikinda, Vrnjacka Banja, Golubinci, Temerin and other places where the housing units for the refugees are being completed in the framework of the Regional Housing Programme.

The Republic of Serbia is firmly committed to its EU accession path. Donations made to the RHP Fund are the proof of EU's assistance to Serbia and of its understanding for the sufferings we experienced in wars waged in the territories of the former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, numerous open issues related to our neighbours still exist. To this day, investigations are conducted in cases of our compatriots who used to live in the said territories, but who either got killed or are still unaccounted-for and registered as missing. It is difficult to accept the compromise necessary from the political point of view, and to forgive for personal misfortune and suffering. The brunt of this burden is borne by all of us together.

This is why I would like to send you a message from this place: let us celebrate life, let this day be the new beginning of your safe and peaceful future, which is the subject of our combined efforts.

I thank you all."