



Address by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the construction of refugee apartments within the framework of the implementation of the Regional Housing Programme in the Republic of Serbia-Sub-Project 5

"Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends and stakeholders of the Regional Housing Program,

I would like to thank you for gathering here today to support and attend the official marking of the commencement of apartment construction for refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the municipality of Ub. Construction of housing units in Ub is one of the phases in the implementation of the Regional Housing Programme, the major regional initiative aimed at addressing the long-term displacement resulting from the 1991-1995 conflict in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Republic of Serbia is particularly devoted to the realization of this program, fully contributing to the implementation of the agreed commitments, which is witnessed by our today's attendance of laying the foundation stone here in Ub.

Apartment construction is carried out on this location within the Regional Housing Programme, Sub-Project 5. The total value of the Sub-Project is 52 million euro, out of which 38.8 million euro comes from donations, while the share of the Republic of Serbia in the project is 13.2 million euro. A total of 1,847 housing units will be constructed within this segment of the housing programme, of which 1,267 apartments are in 27 local self-government units. Out of this number, the construction of 270 apartments is already under way in the Kamendin area of Zemun, to be move-in ready next spring. I would like to recall that the founding stone was laid in Kamendin on 17 November 2017, and that the foundation stone for the largest housing object in the region comprising 276 apartments for the refugee families from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was laid in Veternik, the municipality of Novi Sad, on 7 August 2018, and that we marked the beginning of the construction of 169 housing units in Stara Pazova, on 27 August.

I would also like to point out that distribution of 250 construction material packages in 11 local self-government units was done and 200 village houses have been purchased in 19 local self-government units, within the Sub-Project 5 of the Regional Housing Programme.

Today we are opening the construction site in Ub, for the construction of 20 housing units for 20 families, i.e.55 occupants. The works, the value of which amounts to 415,690.18 euro should be

completed in June 2019. I wish to underline that part of the housing programme in Ub envisages the purchase of 17 village houses for refugees in the amount of 187,000 euro, which has already been done, and the distribution of 20 construction material packages in the amount of 180,000 euro, the realization of which is ongoing.

Serbia is pursuing the policy of solidarity and understanding for all the difficulties facing the displaced persons. Resolution of the housing issue is important, but is only one aspect of the quality of life in a new setting. Local communities have a special role to play in assisting refugee integration in their respective communities. I am proud to underline that all local communities in Serbia, including Ub and the district of Kolubara, without exception, have demonstrated their solidarity and offered assistance in struggling with the misfortunes of life in displacement, as they were helpful in all efforts aimed at current human integration.

In this light, I would like to thank the local government of Ub municipality, headed by President of the Municipality Mr. Darko Glisic, for contributing to and supporting the implementation of the Regional Housing Programme, and I wish to commend the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, headed by Commissioner Vladimir Cucic, for their overall efforts and coordination of the Regional Housing Programme.

I would like to thank, in particular, the donor countries of the Regional Housing Programme Fund, and international organizations participating in the Programme's implementation for combining efforts towards making the Regional Housing Programme come true, and contributing to its progress. Successful implementation of the Regional Housing Programme further reflects the importance of good cooperation and communication among regional countries, thus contributing to the reconciliation process.

I hope that the Programme's future beneficiaries, to whom I am grateful for their patience, will be able to achieve their lifelong aspirations in this prosperous municipality and become an important part of the local economic development. My greetings go to all beneficiaries and participants of the Regional Housing Programme, along with my wish that we continue the works to their completion within the set timeframe, and then mark the delivery of keys to the occupants.

Thank you for your attention."