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REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO
Government of the Republic of Montenegro
BUREAU FOR THE CARE OF REFUGEES

Information on the situation which relates to the issues of refugees and displaced persons in Montenegro 24 - 28 September 2007 – Conference “Implementation of Human Dimension” in Warsaw -OSCE

There are 16.123 of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and 8.474 persons from the former Yugoslav Republics – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Decision on temporary maintenance of rights and status of displaced and internally displaced persons in Montenegro, adopted by Montenegrin Government on 20th of June 2006, has still been in effect in Montenegro and it determines maintenance of the temporary status and rights which internally displaced persons from the former Yugoslav republics and IDPs from Kosovo had on June 3rd, 2006. in Montenegro.

If these persons define themselves for local integration, their status will be determined in accordance with the Montenegrin laws (Law on Asylum, Law on Citizenship, Law on Foreigners)

In procedure is adoption of Montenegrin Constitution, and after that adoption adoption of Law on Citizenship and Law on Foreigners, which have still been in the parliamentary procedure.

Montenegro is conducting process of integration on equal grounds with the process of repatriation, with special regard to their sustainability, in accordance with the National Strategy for Resolving the Issues of Refugees and IDPs in Montenegro. Final decision of refugees and IDPs is of primary importance for these processes. There are many factors which affect this issue (undetermined status of Kosovo, degree of accession of former Yugoslav republics to the European Union, etc.). Therefore, these persons use »double rights«, because they have still not decided which country would define their status.

European Commission, represented by European Agency for Reconstruction partly participated in financing of the project „Programme of Local Integration for Displaced persons through providing of accommodation and economical help as a support to the National Strategy for Resolving the Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Montenegro“ whose aim is to become an integral component of the EAR’s response to the National Strategy. The project has been implemented in cooperation with the Bureau for the Care of Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Montenegro.

According to the informal researches, there are 20.000 of Roma population, out of which 4. 200 are displaced persons. The Roma are one of the most vulnerable ethnic groups in Europe, and their social status is very hard in Montenegro as well, and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro has been taking efforts in order to improve their position. The Government of the Republic of Montenegro adopted National Action Plan for inclusion of Roma population 2005 – 2015 in January 2005. Ministry for Human and

Minority Rights Protection of the Government of Montenegro prepared Draft of the Strategy for Improving the position of RAE population in Montenegro which includes number of concrete measures and activities for the future period whose aim is general improvement of the position of Roma population and their better integration in the social activities of the Republic of Montenegro.

There has still been certain delay in the process of Sarajevo Declaration (document signed by the Governments of the Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Croatia, initiated by OSCE, European Commission and UNHCR) while the Join matrix has still not been created. Countries which have some open issues should solve them, and Montenegro is showing willingness to compromise in order to stop further delay.

Government of the Republic of Montenegro adopted Law on Asylum on June 10th, whose implementation has started in January 2007. This law was created in accordance with the international standards and was favourably rated by the International Community.

Office for asylum within the Ministry of Interior and Public Administration will deal with the issues of the status of asylum – seekers, whereas the organ for care is Bureau for the Care of Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Montenegro which will deal with the activities relating to taking care of asylum - seekers, refugees, and persons with subsidiary, or temporary protection. Taking care of these persons includes assistance in realization of the rights to: accommodation, education, health and social protection, labor, legal assistance, religious freedom, access to humanitarian and non-governmental organizations, humanitarian assistance, family reunification, social inclusion and other stipulated rights defined in the Law on Asylum. Activities of the Bureau will also be directed towards providing of assistance to the returnees, according to the Contract on readmission.

Asylum – seekers will be accommodated in the Reception centre built for such purposes, which has still been under construction.

As an independent state, Montenegro is continuing with practice of humanity, meeting international standards, and thus obeying international law, but it is at the same time aware that finding durable solutions for these categories of people is not efficient without help of international donors and institutions.

Issue of asylum, refugee and migrations in general are important and meeting of standards in this field presents necessary recommendation for accession to the European Union.

We expect that the European institution will give us the necessary support.
In that sense we expect significant support from OSCE.

Podgorica, September 24th, 2007.

**Bureau for the Care of Refugees of the
Republic of Montenegro**