



*Stalna misija Bosne i Hercegovine pri Uredu Ujedinjenih naroda u Becu,  
OSSE i drugim medjunarodnim organizacijama, B E C*  
*Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations Office  
in Vienna, OSCE and other International Organizations, V I E N N A*

ENGLISH only

## Statement by

H.E. Tomislav Leko, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the  
OSCE on the address by the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Refugees, H.E. Antonio Guterres,

to the 984<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council

Vienna, 20 February 2014

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina warmly welcomes the UN High Commissioner, H.E. Antonio Guterres to the PC and commends his address.

Although we fully subscribe to the statement of the EU, we would like to add some comments in our national capacity, following some of the UN High Commissioner remarks:

The delegation of BiH highly appreciates UN High Commissioner highlighting the unresolved displacement situations in the Western Balkans and positively assessing the efforts of the Governments of Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Sarajevo Process with special reference on Regional Housing Programme of Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons. The Programme has been designed to provide the sustainable accommodation for 70.000 refugees and internally displaced persons along respective countries, who still are in search of durable and decent living.

At the same time, the successful implementation of the RHP is of the paramount importance for the overarching reconciliation process in the Western Balkans.

Now, there are almost two years since the Donors' Conference, held in Sarajevo in April 2012.

During that period the key advances were made and the concrete results were achieved in the preparation of necessary administrative and legal framework. To some extent, process was slow for all four countries, but it was request of the donors to meet all administrative and technical preconditions ahead of beginning of implementation. In addition, the first-monetary transactions for the Programme could not be approved before all requirements set by The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) were met.

In the meantime, BiH has signed the Framework Agreement with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). In January this year, after the consent to the ratification by the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, the Presidency of BiH has ratified the agreement, thus enabling its entry into force. This paves the way to signing of a Grant Agreement with the same bank and the withdrawal of the funds.



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We expect BiH to be the first country to begin operational implementation of the RHP on the ground: at the moment, the work on beneficiaries' selection and selection for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave of the sub-projects is in the final stage, acquiring the possibilities for launching the public tenders. The actual work on the ground is feasible in the next few months. It encompasses a total of 950 families with the budget of about 14 million EUR, being already approved by Donor Assembly. This includes the most vulnerable beneficiaries from the different categories. The launching of the first tender is planned in the close future. Procurement policy will be based on the principles of legal practice in the EU and ensured equality, non-discrimination and transparency of the process.

In addition to that, BiH will continue to prepare a good application for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave of sub-projects with additional 900 families from Republic of Serbia and Republic of Croatia and from those being internally displaced in BiH. Thus, the three Waves in BiH will cover nearly 2.000 families out of 5.400 families being included to the RHP in BiH, with the funds already fully insured.

Afterwards, the active work to develop a Programme for the remaining returnees and local integration, which will include the house reconstruction and construction of multifamily buildings, will be performed.

In this very Programme we have seen a model case of an excellent partnership between relevant government institutions at all levels of authority, being the example of good practice and good governance in BiH.

Besides, the cooperation with the OSCE and UNHCR has been traditionally very successful and commendable, as well as with the donors, especially with the European Commission as the leading contributor to the RHP. In this regard, it is important to note that the resources allocated for the RHP from IPA national program for 2013 remained intact in the full amount, although the amount of IPA Programme for BiH was recently significantly reduced by 54%, or 47 million EUR.

In this regard, we quote the Commission's statement from the Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 to the European Parliament and the Council, in part related to the relevant information: *"Progress has been made with regard to the Sarajevo Declaration, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia participate, which aims to find the sustainable solutions for refugees and people displaced by the armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the nineties ...."*

To conclude, the significant results were achieved despite the numerous legal, political, financial and other challenges, and Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue with dedicated work in order to provide its suffering citizens with the durable solutions.

Finally, we would like to thank High Commissioner again for his report and wish him and UNHCR all the success in performing their important duties and commitments.

I thank you.