

# P R E S S R E L E A S E

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## **ASB IMPLEMENTS A NEW EU-FUNDED PROJECT OF PROVIDING SUPPORT TO IDPs, REFUGEES AND VULNERABLE DOMICILE POPULATION IN SERBIA**

The Office of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) in the Republic of Serbia has recently received funds from the EU to implement the project „Support to internally displaced person (IDP), refugees and vulnerable domicile population in Serbia by providing durable housing solutions and economic sustainability measures“ valued at € 1.760,000. This project will be implemented in underdeveloped municipalities in South Serbia, Central Serbia and Vojvodina in partnership with the non-governmental organisation „Educational Centre“ from Leskovac, Serbia and in close co-operation with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees, UNHCR and relevant local authorities and institutions.

The aim of this project is to provide support to at least 44 IDP and refugee families relocating from private accommodation and collective centres to social housing in a protected environment, and provision of building materials for durable housing solutions for at least 70 IDP and refugee families. In addition, 200 IDP and refugee families will receive support in developing sustainable livelihoods through business start up-activities while extremely vulnerable and marginalised families (at least 20 IDP Roma families) will also receive pre-fabricated housing solutions. These IDPs, refugees and extremely vulnerable and marginalised domicile families are overburdened with poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions, and lack of social and economic stability due to overall impoverishment of society, massive refugee influx to Serbia and decline in the quality of social services.

Under this project, ASB especially emphasises the economic status of these refugees and IDPs and will carry out income generating activities such as trainings focussing on starting up businesses and in-kind grants for the successful start-up of businesses. Provision of housing to the IDPs and refugees proved insufficient for achieving sustainability and integration within Serbian society. Therefore, along with housing assistance it is very important to provide economic sustainability to generate income which would enable refugees and IDPs to end being social cases and become equal members of the community.

ASB in Serbia has been assisting refugees and displaced persons, who decide not to return to their country of origin, to integrate into Serbian society through many similar projects of providing durable housing solutions in the past. Along with the EU, the most valuable partners of ASB is the German Government which also funds a current project of closing down the collective centre „Ambulanta Popovac“ in the Municipality of Paraćin and the construction of an apartment building with 17 apartments for 15 IDP families from Kosovo residing in Paraćin and two local extremely vulnerable families.

Since 1999, ASB has implemented projects valued at € 8.6 million in Serbia with funds from EAR, the German Government, USAID and other donors. ASB rebuilt 152 houses and carried out reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure as well as emergency relief.



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Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Serbia  
Avenija 19a, Vladimira Popovića 40/V  
Novi Beograd, Republic of Serbia

Tel. + 381 11 3083 200  
Fax: + 381 11 3083 201



Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund  
Deutschland e.V.

This project is implemented by the Office of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) in the Republic of Serbia

Ul. Proleterske Solidarnosti 27/8  
11070 Novi Beograd, Serbia

Tel. +381 11 311 28 50  
Fax +381 11 311 67 39  
e-mail: asbbg@eunet.yu  
www.asb-see.org

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