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**ASB SEE SUCCESSFULLY FINALISES THE “SUPPORT TO THE RETURN PROCESS OF REFUGEES TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE INTEGRATION PROCESS INTO SERBIA” PROJECT**

With funds from the European Commission (EC), the Office of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund for South Eastern Europe (ASB SEE) has recently finalised the implementation of the “Support to the return process of refugees to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the integration process into Serbia” Project which was implemented in BiH and Serbia in co-operation with local partners: the Serbian Democratic Forum, Serbia (SDF) and the Association for Displaced Persons and Refugees, BiH (ADPR).

The total value of this project was € 312,770. The project partners led by ASB were able to support the repatriation process of 730 Bosnian Serb families to BiH through direct legal counselling for the repossession of private property and socially-owned apartments. In this context, ASB assisted in the direct repossession of 226 apartments by their rightful owners.

Simultaneously, ASB assisted the integration process for 400 refugee families throughout Serbia who have decided to remain in their host country through the economic and social upgrading of their capabilities, which ensured employment opportunities and normal living conditions. Out of these 400 beneficiary families, 200 received training in Active Job Search and 200 attended seminars on how to start-up their proper business. Upon completion of the business start-up training, 100 business plans were selected based on their quality and received a grant by the partners up to the amount of € 1,200.00.

As a 3<sup>rd</sup> component within the completed action, ASB actively worked on the improvement of the socio-economic integration of the settler families within their new host communities (20 municipalities throughout Serbia). This was done through provision of Local Capacity Building (LCB) trainings for local authorities and by setting-up of the local coalitions where the domestic and settler population had the opportunity to jointly articulate their most urgent needs and jointly work on the improvement of their living environment.

Since 1991, ASB SEE has implemented projects in the fields of emergency assistance, return, reconstruction and development in BiH, Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo valued at over € 150 million with funds from multiple donors including the EU and individual member states. ASB SEE assisted in the return of over 47,500 refugees and reconstruction of 7,948 housing units, mine-clearance of approx. 4.5 million m<sup>2</sup>, extensive reconstruction of social and public infrastructure, delivery of humanitarian assistance, economic development and democratisation initiatives.

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