

TPs:Conference on the Integrated Approach to the Social Inclusion of Roma through Housing and Employment

- On behalf of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to welcome you all to today's conference on the integrated approach to the social inclusion of Roma through housing and employment.
- I am particularly glad that, among today's participants, we have representatives from across the OSCE region and the Member States of the Roma Decade.
- The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has had long term commitment to the issue of Roma housing in BiH. In addition to providing technical support to the development and revision of the Roma Action Plan on Housing, the Mission has been heavily involved in monitoring the implementation of this plan in the field.
- Via our unique network of field offices across Bosnia and Herzegovina, we regularly co-operate with Roma communities and local self-governments; and we've used this channel to assess the needs of almost all individual Roma communities across the country.
- Today, my colleagues will share with you the findings gathered through our monitoring of the implementation of the Roma Action Plan on Housing in BiH, along with recommendations. Please allow me to highlight some important observations.
- Since the adoption of the plan, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities have allocated circa 1 million Euros annually for its implementation. While this shows commendable commitment by the BiH authorities to address the Roma community's housing needs, today over 7000 Roma families in BiH are still in need of adequate housing solutions.

- This number unfortunately includes the most vulnerable Roma families, those who are categorized as homeless, without any property and living in sub-standard conditions or in illegally constructed buildings.
- For these most vulnerable and excluded families, it is imperative that we continue to advocate for the development of social housing solutions. Social housing is currently the only model which can resolve the housing problems of these most vulnerable families.
- Therefore, while the efforts made so far are very significant, there is still a burning need to continue addressing the issue of housing for those Roma families that need it most.
- As this conference brings together participants from numerous countries, I invite you to use this opportunity to learn from our good practice examples, one of which you saw in Mostar, and to contribute to our mutual learning by sharing your examples of good practice and successfully implemented solutions.
- The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain committed to working with Roma communities and governmental counterparts across the country in order to ensure greater Roma inclusion.
- Thank you for your attention and I wish you all a successful conference.