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The Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations at Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and referring to the Note Verbal dated 5 April 2012, related to the questionnaire on housing finance institutions, policies and programmes elaborated by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, has the honor to transmit response of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration. *mt*

Geneva, 25 May 2012



OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
E-mail: [srhousing@ohchr.org](mailto:srhousing@ohchr.org)

## Questionnaire on Housing Policies and Programmes

At present, there is no housing policy, nor social housing policy or legislation, in place in BiH. However, **the importance of developing social housing policy and legislation is underscored.** An initiative to do so currently is underway, led by the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but is still in development. In the interim, a number of social housing projects for displaced persons and other vulnerable groups, such as Roma, have been implemented in BiH in recent years in partnership with governmental authorities at all levels (state, entity, municipal and, in the Federation of BiH, also cantonal authorities). In practice, therefore, there already exists a certain amount of experience in the country with social housing, at least on an *ad hoc* basis at the local level.

Regarding Roma population, some municipalities allocated land or locations and the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina constructed social housing units. The projects were based on co-financing of the Ministry and local communities (good examples of social housing units were in Zenica, Banja Luka and Mostar).

The project aiming at collective centres closure to be soon implemented through the CEB loan would be the first countrywide project on social housing. This Project also complements a broader regional initiative to secure durable solutions to protracted displacement in the Western Balkans. In addition to being justified by need, as the target groups are dispersed throughout BiH the countrywide scope of these projects is important for ensuring consistency of approach, standards, and eligibility criteria. Indeed, implementation of the two projects, as well as other ongoing initiatives, would contribute to and be **instrumental to furthering the development of social housing policy in BiH.**

In addition, these initiatives also seek to promote learning, innovation, and policy development in the field of social housing in BiH, and perhaps also beyond. In particular, they should **lay the groundwork for the future development of social housing policy in BiH**, which will benefit vulnerable groups more broadly, including but not limited to IDPs, and will be even more geographically comprehensive in its implementation.

Moreover, implementation of the projects should help to **clarify the roles and responsibilities of Government institutions and agencies to assist vulnerable groups with specialised housing needs.** This, in turn, will support the creation of a clearer framework for partnership between relevant government institutions at all levels (state, entity, cantonal, and municipal), in line with ongoing policy reforms, which aim to decentralise and strengthen management and administration of the housing sector.

For more information on legal framework, situation analysis and strategic policy directions please refer to **the first Report of BiH on implementation of the European Social Charter (revised) for the reference period: 1 January 2005 - 31 December 2009.**