

Courtesy translation

Belgrade, 7 February 2014

Dear Mr. Commissioner,

Regarding proposals to improve the situation of asylum seekers in the Republic of Serbia, as per your letter dated 27 November 2013, I would like to inform you of the measures that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has taken with regard to this issue in the previous period.

In the framework of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, a Project Group was established on 23 December 2013, entrusted with the task to review facts and legal regulations on asylum and propose solutions to serve as a basis for the drafting of a new Asylum Law. The purpose of these activities is to overcome the existing procedural and material legal shortcomings embodied in the Asylum Law in force, or to put in place an efficient procedure of making decisions on asylum applications.

The Project Group is chaired by State Secretary Vladimir Bozovic, LL.M. In addition to experts from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, the Project Group also includes representatives of the civil society or relevant non-governmental organizations, and those of international organizations such as the United Nations, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration, and the EU Delegation to Serbia.

On 28 November 2013, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Conclusion on the establishment of three temporary asylum centers in Obrenovac, Sjenica and Tutin. Aside from the existing asylum centers in Bogovadja and Banja Koviljaca, which have already been established and are operating as before, the total number of asylum centres in the Republic of Serbia has thus been increased to five centres. This essentially contributes to the settlement of the accommodation problem facing asylum applicants.

Furthermore, it has been suggested to amend the Rulebook on the internal organization and job schemes of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This will enable the Asylum Section to become a special Asylum Office and to operate as an autonomous unit with more staff and larger capacity for processing asylum applications.

The suggested measures are a specific contribution of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to the settlement of this problem, i.e. application of the relevant international and European standards.

State Secretary
Vanja Vukic

Mr. Nils Muiznieks
Commissioner for Human Rights
Council of Europe
Strasbourg