

UNECE - Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development

The National Housing Strategy, which was implemented in the previous ten-year period, and the Law on Social Housing set out the basic strategic and institutional elements of the housing system in Montenegro, which was developed at the state and local levels in the previous period.

They set forth: the scope of persons entitled to have their housing needs addressed pursuant to the Law; division of competences between the state and the local level; obligation of the Government to adopt the Social Housing Programme which sets out the goals of social housing development, as well as the sources and manner of securing funds for its implementation; manner of implementation; obligation of local government to adopt local social housing programmes aligned with the state programme adopted by the Government.

In the previous period the Government of Montenegro adopted and implemented two Social Housing Programme, through which the following mid-term projects have been implemented:

1. Regional housing project for displaced and internally displaced persons, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with The Council of Europe Development Bank -CEB support;
2. Affordable housing project in cooperation with The Council of Europe Development Bank - CEB - 1000+ Project, implemented by the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism;
3. Housing provision to socially disadvantaged categories of citizens in the north of Montenegro project;
4. Projects of the Montenegrin Fund for Solidarity Housing Development (CFSSI);
5. Projects of two housing cooperatives, which include employees in the health system and employees in the education system, and also in the security sector, supported by line ministries --Government of Montenegro.

I would like to emphasize that the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism is currently working on implementation and realization of the 4th phase of 1000+ Project. This Project represent the continuation of "Housing Mortgage for low income Persons (1000+ Housing)" project which was successfully realized through three phases. During the previously three project stages 1186 family households have solved their housing issues under the 1000 plus Project, i.e. 3000 of the Montenegrin citizens that are stated as members of those households. The previous stages of the project have been evaluated as transparent and successful and one of the best CEB partner projects.

Through this Project, the Government tackles specific objectives:

- Increase the access of eligible households to permanent housing through a subsidized mortgage scheme with considerable social effects;
- Encouraging construction and bank sector in order to increase economic activity in the field of real estate transactions, with special attention to encouraging the construction of residential buildings in accordance with environmental protection criteria and environmental standards of construction;
- Contribution to making old and new buildings more energy efficient that helps the Montenegro achieves its energy and climate goals.

When it comes to energy efficiency projects, the realization of the Project for installation of solar panels for households and companies was initiated. In this year we started the implementation of the Project for the installation of solar panels for households and companies. The Project is implementing in cooperation with Electric Power distribution Company and Eco-Fond. Government of Montenegro provide a subsidy of 20% of the value of purchase and installation to each individual user of the Project.

In the area of spatial planning and illegal structures,

The general premise for Montenegro's EU approximation and integration commitment is to maximise its efforts to make applicable the standards of the European Union, and in that sense approach the formulation and implementation of a policies related to legalisation of illegal structures, in context of housing policies and spatial planning policies. Montenegro has been facing for many years the issue

of illegal construction. The number of illegally built constructions is measured in tens of thousands. The process of legalisation of illegal structures began with the entry into force of the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of Facilities in 2018, and furtherly improved by the adoption of a set of amendments from August 2020.

Local governments are responsible for conducting the legalization procedure.

According to the data from June 2021, over 53,000 requests for legalization of illegally constructed buildings were submitted in Montenegro, and more than 47,000 requests for legalization were processed. So far, about 2000 buildings are legalized, but it is complex process which implies the active participation of the illegal builders themselves, the preparation of technical documentation and the payment of fees, which affects the dynamics and efficiency of the procedure.

Pursuant to the Law, a decision on legalization may be issued for an illegal building located on an orthographic photograph and constructed in accordance with basic urban parameters of the urban or spatial document. If the facility is not built in accordance with the urban plan or the plan does not exist in that area, the procedure is suspended until the adoption of the appropriate planning document. Also, precondition for issuing the legalization decision is the resolved property rights on the facility and the land on which the facility was built, so that is also one of the reasons for terminating the procedure.

It is very important to emphasize that in this moment, we are in the process of **drafting of the Housing Policy of Montenegro for the period 2021–2030, and in the process of amending of the Housing Law.**

The main goal of drafting these documents is to determine the strategic goals of housing policy, define the vision and goals of housing policy, define operational goals for the implementation of established strategic goals and harmonize housing policy with umbrella strategic documents adopted in previous period. We are working on the supporting document such as Housing Support Program which will define the activities for the implementation of the Strategy, i.e. the database of projects that will contribute to the development of housing policy. Housing policy of Montenegro will, among other things, define a new model of housing policy to address housing needs under favourable conditions for all categories of the population, specify target groups that can exercise the right to housing support by state and local governments, ways and criteria of this right, as well as mechanisms that will be based on the principles of transparency and objectivity.

Also, based on the decision of the Government of Montenegro, **the drafting of a new Law on Legalization of Illegal Buildings** has begun, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of conducting procedures, simplifying it, and specifying certain stages of the procedure.