

REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS
ON RESETTLEMENT OF THE INFORMAL ROMA SETTLEMENT NEAR BELVILLE



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Belgrade, 23 July 2012

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About the Report

Resettlement of the population from the settlement located near "Belville" was monitored by the Protector of Citizens in all of its stages (preparation, relocation of the population and their temporary or emergency accommodation, their return to original places of residence, their integration in the initial months following the relocation). Direct knowledge of their position, cooperation with local communities where the Roma population was relocated and, finally, a number of actions pursued by it with respect to the exercise of their rights enabled the Protector of Citizens to prepare the Report which, in addition to detailed description of the process of relocation and resettled population's integration issues, also contains a number of recommendations for relevant government and local authorities aimed at remedying the identified omissions and creating conditions for the implementation of actions under the government Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia. Protector of Citizens is convinced that only in this manner can the ultimate goal of resettlement – improvement of the status of resettled population - be achieved.

Summary

Resettlement of 257 families, or 974 people, from the informal settlement located near “Belville” was carried out on 26 April 2012 by relevant authorities of the City of Belgrade’s administration, to 5 suburban areas in Belgrade and 9 cities and towns across Serbia, based on the “Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement” adopted by the City Council.

During the course of resettlement and relocation, human dignity was respected and no force was used.

Protector of Citizens established that the resettled residents within the territory of Belgrade, even though the containers to which they were relocated do not represent a permanent and ideal housing solution, have incomparably better living conditions and support from the relevant departments (education, social welfare, health protection, personal documents, transport, employment) than the ones they had at the location where they had previously lived. This, however, is not sufficient for full integration, and it is worrying that over time the problems have been compounding, instead of decreasing. Difficulties experienced by the population relocated to other towns and cities, where they have property, are considerably more serious due to local authorities’ lack of will, funds and organization.

A comparison of the actual results with the obligations provided by the Law on Ministries and Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, as well as recommendations by Protector of Citizens, indicates that the relevant ministries of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government and Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning), as well as local authorities outside Belgrade to which parts of the population have been relocated, have demonstrated inaction with respect to planning, preparation, implementation of and follow-up activities related to resettlement. This failure may affect the final outcome and goal of resettlement – improvement of living conditions and integration.

In the cities of Vrnjacka Banja, Leskovac, Novi Sad and Nis, as well as municipalities of Bojnik, Lebane and Prokuplje, to which the population that has registered temporary or permanent residence in such areas was relocated, Protector of Citizens identified serious issues that require a significantly different approach.

Temporary accommodation within some of such areas is below minimal housing standards and human dignity and no actions for socio-economic integration are being taken.

Such local communities do not have their own strategies and action plans for the improvement of the status of Roma population and do not consistently perform their obligations related to the protection of human and minority rights in accordance with the Law on Local Government, or the obligations contained in the Action Plan adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia with the "Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma". As a result, the Prokuplje Centre for Social Care was not informed that nineteen people having residence in Prokuplje had been returned from the "Belville" informal settlement to this municipality; in Nis, two months following the resettlement, the relocated families have emergency accommodation with no water or electricity; City of Leskovac and its Centre for Social Care pay the accommodation and food for relocated population in the amount that would otherwise be sufficient to meet a large part of their needs for permanent socio-economic integration; cities of Vranje and Novi Sad have been discussing, for weeks, with the neighbouring municipalities of Zabalj and Surdulica which one should provide emergency accommodation for the relocated and impoverished population; Roma population with registered residence in Bojnik, as well as in other places, who own real property receive the financial assistance in the amount that is twice the amount allocated to relocated population who have no property or place to stay and who may not survive without financial assistance. Such issues are also the reason why the Protector of Citizens has been receiving information that some people have already returned to Belgrade, to some of the remaining illegal and unsanitary settlements.

In Belgrade, where the City Administration had held five meetings with the settlement residents informing them of the most significant facts related to resettlement (places of relocation, criteria for carrying out the resettlement, type of assistance and support that may be expected in places of relocation, date), the consultation process, having in mind the hard socio-economic living conditions of the relocated population, should have been more intensive, longer and more detailed, and in full compliance with "Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacements" of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Even though the container settlements at the majority of Belgrade locations represent a solid solution for such type of temporary accommodation, they must not become the permanent solution, and at some locations (Dren, Jabucki Rit) certain issues have been identified that need to be urgently addressed. Permanent solution needs to be reached as soon as practicable, but one should keep in mind that an appropriate consultation process will be necessary and important for such a purpose.

Belgrade City Administration needs to continue and intensify the activities intended for the integration of relocated families, in accordance with Action Plan, and take additional actions, in cooperation with relevant government authorities, in order for all people to exercise their recognized rights (personal documents, education, health and social protection, employment...).

City of Belgrade's efforts to initiate further actions and to coordinate, with the assistance of Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government, the activities related to full integration of relocated population and ensure equal conditions of their permanent accommodation, both for the population relocated to the newly formed settlements in Belgrade and those relocated outside Belgrade, represents an example of a good initiative, which the Protector of Citizens supports and contributes, within its powers and capability, to its implementation. However, prior to Protector of Citizens' support, this initiative needs to be supported by, and its implementation facilitated through the activities of, the relevant authorities of the executive branch at both national and local level, before which the citizens exercise their rights.

I INTRODUCTION

The resettlement of the informal and unsuitable settlement predominantly inhabited by Roma population, and located next to the “Belville” residential and office complex, in Novi Beograd, was carried out on 26 April 2012. The resettlement was carried out by the administrative departments of the City of Belgrade. In accordance with the Action Plan, previously submitted to the Protector of Citizens by the City Administration, resettlement was carried out for the purpose of bringing the public areas in Block 42, located between the Jurija Gagarina, Antifasicke Borbe, Djordja Stanojevica streets and the railroad, behind which the Milutina Milankovica Street is located, where the construction of an intercity bus station is planned, to their intended condition.

From this location, 257 families, or 974 settlement residents, have been relocated. Based on the previously determined criteria – record of temporary or permanent residence, whereof the representatives of the City Administration had notified the relocated population, as well as the Protector of Citizens on a meeting held 4 April, 124 families, or 487 people, have been relocated to five newly formed “container-type” settlements, located within the territory of four Belgrade municipalities, while 133 families, or 487 people, have been relocated to nine municipalities outside Belgrade.

Ninety-three families, living on the route of the future access road to the Ada Bridge, have not been relocated from the informal settlement. Based on the information provided by the representatives of city authorities at the meetings where the resettlement had been prepared, the relocation of these families will be carried out in the autumn of 2012, based on a project implemented in association with European Investment Bank. The families will be provided with housing facilities made of solid material, including the complete infrastructure, but the location where the facilities are to be built has not been determined yet.

Belgrade City Administration, in association with Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government and international organizations, intends to secure funds in order to provide all residents of the former settlement, regardless of the locations to which they were relocated, with equal, sustainable housing units.

II PREPARATION OF RESETTLEMENT

II.1. Actions by public administration

Protector of Citizens takes action with respect to evictions of citizens from the apartments and buildings, which they are required to leave under decisions of relevant authorities, by ensuring that relevant authorities and departments responsible for enforcement of such decisions act in compliance with laws and regulations, and especially that human rights are not violated during the course of eviction. When necessary, or when Protector of Citizens finds that relevant local authorities have not protected the rights of residents being relocated in a proper manner, the Protector of Citizens requests that the evictions be delayed until the conditions for carrying out the eviction with full protection of human rights are met. Protector of Citizens makes such requests especially when, in the course of eviction, human rights of members of vulnerable groups– children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, elderly and Roma population – are not protected.

Protector of Citizens has monitored the group resettlement of Roma population from informal settlements for the first time during the resettlement of residents from the settlement located in Block 72, in Novi Beograd. At the time, based on actions pursued by it, facts it had determined and analysis of the commitments undertaken by the state upon adoption of “Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma”, Protector of Citizens issued a Recommendation demanding that the relevant authorities of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government, Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia and the City of Belgrade carry out the resettlement by ensuring that the human rights of the population relocated from Block 72 are protected, and demanding that the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government form a standing workgroup that would take care of resettlements of the residents of informal settlements and prepare a regulation under which the local municipalities would act during such resettlements. This part of the recommendation was not implemented, and the Ministry requested from the Protector of Citizens a delay of its implementation by ninety days, to which the Protector of Citizens agreed.

Protector of Citizens started monitoring the resettlement of residents of the settlement located next to “Belville”, i.e. the actions of public authorities during such re-

settlement and manner in which the relocated residents' human rights are protected, in March 2012, based on the information received from international and local non-governmental organizations that the relevant city authorities had been taking actions for relocation of this settlement without providing for emergency accommodation for residents. Based on such information, Protector of Citizens contacted the city authorities and Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government for the purpose of informing them of the adequate international standards that apply to evacuation of slums, but also for the purpose of establishing cooperation with such authorities in order to ensure that the rights of families from such settlements are protected when their housing issues are being addressed.

Protector of Citizens was even then convinced that a consistent and adequate implementation of its recommendation would have contributed to the better addressing of the problems faced by the City of Belgrade's administration in the process of resettlement of Roma population from the informal settlement located next to "Belville". Specifically, as early as at preparatory meetings, it was determined that the city's administration, namely Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade, had been conducting most of its activities without proper support from the relevant state authorities. At these meetings, representatives of city departments stated that they had determined the identities of the residents of such settlements, as well as their registered places of temporary or permanent residence, that they had defined their social, economic, housing and status position, specifically that the majority of families in the settlement had had no housing facilities they could return to without proper financial support, as well as that the families' socio-economic position had been extremely poor and that they had had to be provided with appropriate assistance in the local communities to which they would return. They also stated that the return of the residents of settlement next to "Belville" to the cities and municipalities where they have registered temporary or permanent residence would fail, and that they would most probably come back to Belgrade, if there was no support from the communities to which they would be relocated.

The purpose of highlighting such issues during the preparations for resettlement was to contribute to the relevant authorities' taking actions and performing activities arising from the Law on Ministries and Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma that was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2009.

Pursuant to the Law on Ministries¹, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government conducts "state administration affairs related", among other things, "to the protection and improvement of human and minority rights" (Article 11, paragraph 1), and, through its Human and Minority Rights Administration, "**coordinates the operation of public administration in the area of human rights protection**" (Article 11, paragraph 2). This Ministry was assigned by the Govern-

1 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 16/2011)

ment of the Republic of Serbia, under the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, to act as a partner institution to the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning during the course of implementation of the first strategic goal of the action plan in the area of housing – introduction of affirmative action to the housing and related legislation and strategic documents by preparing the “amendments and supplements to the housing and related legislation and strategic documents in accordance with principles of affirmative action” and to align “local legislation with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (Section 2.1 of the Strategy). Under the Strategy, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government is required to monitor implementation of another two activities: “addressing housing needs of the Roma refugees and displaced persons”, falling within the competence of the Ministry of Kosovo and Metohija and Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia (Section 2.4), and “action training of residents of Roma settlements for the purpose of their inclusion in the operation of local decision-making bodies and forming local self-government bodies within the territories where Roma settlements with 1,000 to 5,000 residents are located”. The “Strategy” also indicates the obligations of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government with respect to addressing Roma status issues (Sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3); position of resettled population (Section 4.2.1) and other obligations related to the implementation of the “Strategy” goals or monitoring thereof.

Under the Law on Ministries, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is required to perform public administration activities that are, among other things, related to “exercise of rights and integration of refugees and displaced persons, returnees under readmission agreement, **Roma population**, as well as other underprivileged groups” (Article 15, paragraph 1). Under the “Strategy”, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is assigned certain duties related to the informing of returnees under Readmission Agreement on their rights (Section 5.4), status of Roma women (Section 9.1), as well as Roma population’s better knowledge of their rights in the area of social protection and insurance (Section 7.2.1) and, finally, duties related to the **sustainable integration of the Roma population into the local community** (Section 7.4), **which, among other things, includes the activities related to “networking of all institutions in the local community that are key to Roma population’s empowerment”** (7.4.3).

As previously mentioned, under the Government’s “Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma”, the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning is responsible for key goals related to addressing Roma population’s housing issues (Sections 2.1, 2.2) which, among other things, includes conducting research and survey on Roma population’s housing needs (2.2.1), strengthening institutional capacities in housing agencies and other organizations dealing with housing issues at local and national level, as well as **“addressing urgent situations in slums and evacuation of slums (Section 2.3) which, among other things, includes “Evacuation of settlements (slums) where conditions are extremely poor and which may not be covered by the process of improvement and reconstruction (2.3.1).**

Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia is a government authority which, pursuant to Law on Refugees, performs activities related to determination of refugees' status, provision of care to refugees, maintaining records defined by such law, coordination of assistance provided to refugees by other domestic and foreign authorities and organizations and ensuring equal and timely provision of such assistance, provision of accommodation for and relocation of refugees within the administrative units, provision of conditions for the refugees' return to areas they have left or other areas as determined by the Commissariat or until their permanent accommodation is otherwise provided. National Strategy for Addressing the Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, adopted by the Government in May 2002, defines main principles and courses of action of the Commissariat for the purpose of reaching permanent solutions to the issues of refugees in the Republic of Serbia. Activities for improvement of conditions for the refugee's return to their countries of origin and provision of conditions for the local integration of refugees who have submitted a request for or already have Serbian citizenship represent two main, equal courses of action intended for reaching permanent solution to the refugee issue in the Republic of Serbia. Under Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Commissariat is responsible for addressing housing needs and issues of Roma refugees and displaced persons (Section 2.4) which includes "providing technical solutions for improvement of living conditions and sanitary and hygienic conditions" (2.4.1); "Measures and actions for the purpose of sustainable return of Roma population to Kosovo and Metohija" (2.4.2) and "**Measures and actions for the purpose of permanent integration**" (2.4.3).

The document "Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacements", prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations High Commissioner, clearly states that "while a variety of distinct actors may carry out, sanction, demand, propose, initiate, condone or acquiesce to forced evictions, **States bear the principal obligation for applying human rights and humanitarian norms, in order to ensure respect for the rights enshrined in binding treaties and general principles of international public law**, as reflected in the present guidelines. This does not, however, absolve other parties, including project managers and personnel, international financial and other institutions or organizations, transnational and other corporations, and individual parties, including private landlords and landowners, of all responsibility".

However, at the meetings organized by city administration on 4, 18 and 23 April, respectively, where the evacuation of the settlement was prepared, such **government authorities did not take an active part**. Representatives of the Human and Minority Rights Administration did attend these meetings, but failed to show any initiative that might imply their taking an active part in the resettlement of the residents of such settlements.

The first meeting, of the three held, was attended by the representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy who pointed that the Ministry had informed the centres for social care in the local communities that, for the purpose of resettlement of the "Bel-

ville" settlement, the City of Belgrade's administration would reregister the Roma population having permanent/temporary residence within their territory. Representative of the Ministry informed the present parties, which also included Deputy Protector of Citizens, that the Ministry had no jurisdiction under which it could take part in the resettlement and that it lacked any resources to assist the resettlement, as it had done with respect to evacuation of the informal settlement located under the "Gazela" Bridge.

II.2. Actions by Belgrade's city administration

It should be noted that that the personnel of the Secretariat of the Protector of Citizens conducted a number of interviews with the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville" – in August 2009, when the settlement's residents protested about their living conditions and assaults made on them; in July 2010 and 2011, respectively, when the complaints of the settlement's residents were received and information on implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma was collected, and finally in April 2012, several weeks prior to the resettlement. **Living conditions in the settlement were extremely poor – there were no solid structures, taps, septic tanks or outhouses, sanitary conditions were unsatisfactory, and the majority of the residents had complaints with respect to poor financial situation and pointed out the issues related to employment, children's schooling, exercise of rights to health and social protection, assaults made on them and the intolerance demonstrated by the residents of the surrounding residential areas.** A certain number of settlement's residents had no personal documents. The residents of the settlements also included families displaced from Kosovo and Metohija who, according to their statements, apart from the refugee identity documents received upon arrival to Belgrade, had never been offered to address their issues of status by receiving the assistance provided through the Commissariat for Refugees.

Relocation of the settlement's residents was necessary, not only because it hindered City development, but also **due to the conditions in which such residents had been living**. However, even though it had been clear for years that the residents of this settlement, as well as of other informal settlements in Belgrade, had been living in extremely poor conditions, relevant authorities did not collect any information on the number of residents and their needs, and did not they take any actions in order to enable them the exercise and protection of basic human rights.

In this area, the only exception was the city administration which, on a number of occasions, determined the number of residents within the settlement through its Secretariat for Social Protection. In March 2012, Secretariat made a record of 128 families, or around five hundred people with registered permanent/temporary residence in Belgrade, whereas the last record made immediately prior to the resettlement showed that there had been 133 families, or 472 people in the settlement.

By means of "Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement", city authorities set out the criteria under which the families were to exercise their rights related to resettlement. The City administration defined its obligations in relation to two distinct groups of the settlement's residents – "households from Belgrade and internally displaced families from Kosovo and Metohija". Families whose members had registered residence in other local municipalities in Serbia were not planned to be taken care of during the course of resettlement since the opinion was that their care and integration should be provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as well as the cities and municipalities where such families' legal residence had been registered. In the "Action Plan", it was stated that the city administration "had made an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy under which such Ministry would take responsibility for the resettlement of these families", and that the position that families which had come to Belgrade from other parts of Serbia should be provided with other type of rights "was based on the assumption that these families owned property in other parts of the country and that they were economic migrants coming to Belgrade in search of work" and that "the city authorities did not wish to encourage further migrations from rural areas to the informal settlements and had no responsibility for taking care of these families". The families that owned any kind of housing facility within the territory of the Republic of Serbia had an obligation to register such facilities with the city's Secretariat for Social Protection. Any person who owned some type of real property had no right to the City's assistance following the resettlement.

City administration verified the families' properties and, as the Protector of Citizens was informed, there were no irregularities, i.e. cases in which the right to assistance following the resettlement would be exercised by the families owning property. However, the position that the City of Belgrade's administration would not provide assistance to residents of the settlement who had registered temporary or permanent residence outside of Belgrade was abandoned. **Specifically, upon decision of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy not to take care of the resettlement and integration of the settlement's residents in local communities outside of Belgrade, Belgrade's city administration, in association with nine cities and municipalities, assumed the obligations related to their care, and has used its efforts to provide resources for permanent and sustainable solution to their housing needs, which is to be discussed below.**

Under the "Action Plan", city administration set forth that the right to relocation to a housing unit would be allowed to families whose members, as of March 2012, when the city administration made the last record of the settlement's residents, lived together under one roof. The families of 1 to 5 members were entitled to one mobile housing unit consisting of 14.8 m², whereas the families of 6 and more members were entitled to two mobile housing units consisting of a total of 29.6 m². Finally, families of eleven and more members were to be allocated three mobile housing units consisting of a total of 44.4 m². It was decided that the mobile housing units would be positioned at five city locations having full infrastructure, which meant that the access roads would

be built and refurbished, and that sewerage, water supply and electricity would be provided for each mobile housing unit. In the settlements, sanitary containers would be installed, equipped with shower enclosures, water heaters, toilets, and the number of sanitary containers would be in compliance with the criterion of no more than five persons per one toilet, and ten persons per shower enclosure.

Finally, under the "Action Plan", City of Belgrade would bear the costs of electricity, water supply and garbage disposal for the initial three months, commencing from the time of resettlement, upon which such costs would be borne by the families, which is to be provided for by entering into an agreement with the residents of the newly formed settlements.

At the preparatory meetings, representatives of the city administration informed the Protector of Citizens that, in accordance with the "Action Plan" for the resettlement of the "Belville" informal settlement, they **had held five public meetings with the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville" where they had informed the residents of the above criteria, places of resettlement, assistance they would be entitled to, integration actions that would follow upon resettlement, children's schooling, employment opportunities, but also of the changes that had occurred which had caused deviations from action plans**, etc. Even though such consultation meetings were to be held each week until the resettlement, based on the information received by the Protector of Citizens during the monitoring of preparations for resettlement, as well as according to claims contained in the "Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement", five such meetings were held – on 15 and 30 March and on 5, 12 and 24 April 2012, respectively.

III RESETTLEMENT

City of Belgrade's administration planned to carry out the resettlement of the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville" in two stages. In the first stage, the residents having registered permanent or temporary residence in Belgrade, and not living on the route of the future road, as well as Roma population having registered permanent/temporary residence in municipalities outside of Belgrade (Bojnik, Vranje, Zabalj, Nis, Novi Sad, Lebane, Leskovac, Pozarevac, Prokuplje, Sabac), were relocated to the five newly formed settlements in four Belgrade municipalities (Palilula, Obrenovac, Rakovica, Cukarica). In the second stage, in the autumn of 2012, the city administration will relocate the settlement's residents living on the route of the future road. Such residents include 93 families, or about five hundred people whose resettlement should be carried out based on the project which the City of Belgrade should implement in association with European Investment Bank.

The first stage of resettlement was planned to be carried out on 24 April 2012 by the relevant city secretariats, departments and public enterprises (emergency department, fire brigade, utility and inspection departments, public utility companies), with support from relevant government authorities. However, since the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy failed to provide relevant coordination with centres for social care in local municipalities outside of Belgrade, the resettlement was postponed to 26 April. It should be noted once more that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, under the Law on Ministries, is in charge of the activities intended for integration of Roma population into the local communities, as well as that during the resettlement of the residents of informal settlement located below "Gazela" Bridge, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy played an active part and contributed, in association with local communities, to the Roma population's integration in the cities and municipalities to which they had been relocated. Representatives of the centres for social care and local municipalities in Leskovac, Nis, Surdulica, Lebane and Bojnik pointed out that the coordination and professional and financial support received from this Ministry with respect to the resettlement of the residents of informal settlement located below "Gazela" Bridge enabled them to provide for the residents' care and integration in an easier, better and more organized manner than it was the case with the relocation of residents of informal settlement located next to "Belville" when the Ministry did not participate.

By direct, several months-long monitoring of the resettlement of residents of the informal settlement, Protector of Citizens determined that the Ministry of Labour and

Social Policy had failed to act in compliance with its obligation, as set out by the Law, to provide for the Roma population's integration within the local communities, as well as that at the preparatory meetings, attended by the representatives of the Protector of Citizens in the capacity of observers, the Ministry had failed to inform the city administration of the reasons for not taking part in the resettlement, i.e. for discontinuing their activities after informing the centres for social care in the local municipalities that the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville", having registered permanent/temporary residence within their territories, would be instructed to return to such areas.

Such actions of the Ministry contributed to both problems occurring prior to the resettlement and the problems existing in the majority of local municipalities to which the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville" had been relocated. Specifically, in the period from 20 to 26 April, the city administration, in association with local municipalities, organized reception and care for the settlement's residents and, in general, agreed to undertake commitments related to their further integration. City of Belgrade undertook to pay the local municipalities, from its budget, the funds intended for one-time and urgent assistance for the relocated people. The agreement made at the time that each family to be relocated would receive one-time financial assistance in the amount of RSD 20,000, and that families owning unsuitable housing facilities would receive RSD 100,000 for their urgent refurbishment, was complied with, to the exception of two families, Pelifanovic in Surdulica and Veselovic in Zabalj². Based on the Conclusion of the Mayor, dated 9 May 2012, Secretariat for Social Protection of the City Administration was allowed to transfer a total of RSD 4,420,000 to the centres for social care in the nine local municipalities for such purposes.

III.1. Relocation from the settlement – respect for the human dignity of the relocated people and protection of human rights

Resettlement of the Roma settlement located next to "Belville" started on 26 April 2012, at 06:30 hours, and nine teams of the Secretariat of the Protector of Citizens monitored the resettlement of the residents of the settlement located next to "Belville" as well as their arrival to the five newly formed settlements in four Belgrade municipalities and the care provided to them in Vranje, Leskovac and Nis. Protector of Citizens monitored the actions by the public authorities during the course of resettlement. Based on the monitoring methodology prepared by the Protector of Citizens in accordance with principles contained in Report of the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on

² These families had been living in shelters located in the cities next to municipalities where their members had had registered residence. They were provided with emergency accommodation only upon actions taken by the Protector of Citizens, and the ombudsman has initiated relevant proceedings with respect to the omissions resulting in non-payment of financial assistance.

evictions, Protector of Citizens monitored the manner of resettlement, actions taken and protection of human rights during the course of resettlement.

In addition to the Protector of Citizens, resettlement was also monitored by the representatives of the Delegation of the European Union, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as representatives of international and local nongovernmental organizations, such as "Amnesty International", "Praxis", "Regional Centre for Minorities", "Belgrade Centre for Human Rights", "Centre for Ethnicity Research", "Centre for Minority Rights". During the course of resettlement, no representative of the government authorities was present.

Traffic near the settlement was stopped at 06:30 hours and was not allowed until the completion of resettlement. Course and carrying out of the resettlement was maintained by the representatives of the City secretariats, and was conducted by over four hundred employees of the City's public utility companies (JKP "Gradska cistoca", JKP "Zelenilo", JKP "Beograd put", JKP "Vodovod i kanalizacija", JKP "Parking servis", JKP "Beogradske elektrane", GSP Beograd, "Zoohigijena", JP "Javno osvetljenje", "Elektroizgradnja Beograd", SP "Lasta"). They were supported by the emergency department teams, fire brigades and municipal police, deployed around the informal settlement. Ministry of the Interior regulated the traffic and supervised the resettlement. No force of any kind against the settlement's residents was reported, and there was no need for police action, except for the isolation and securing of the structure where an explosive device was found and from which it was quickly removed.

Throughout the process of resettlement, representatives of the City of Belgrade provided detailed information on the resettlement at two visibly designated locations,



as well as at other locations within and near the settlement. Representatives of the Secretariat for Social Protection and the representatives of centres for social care provided the necessary information to the settlement's residents inquiring about eligibility for social welfare.

Representatives of the Protector of Citizens did not register, at this stage, any ill treatment of the residents of the informal settlement by the organizers of resettlement or any human rights violations. Certain problems occurring during the day were resolved on the spot by the representatives of the city departments, using their efforts to provide care for each resident of the settlement.

For example, a certain number of families, and Protector of Citizens verified that there were no less than four families, which were planned to be relocated to local municipalities outside of Belgrade changed their minds on that day, expressing intention to stay in Belgrade, while one resident refused to be accommodated at the shelter in Belgrade. City representatives accepted their requests and relocated them to the newly formed container settlements in Belgrade.

In their interviews with the settlement's residents, representatives of the Protector of Citizens were told that the residents had been first informed of the planned resettlement in March, when they had also been provided with the options for care and further integration. One week prior to the evacuation, they were informed of the date and precise locations of resettlement, and on Tuesday, 24 April, they were provided with the schedule and locations where each family would be relocated. It was established that a number of families that had been planned to be returned to their places of residence in the cities and municipalities across Serbia did not have any required information on resettlement and accommodation that would be provided to them at these municipalities and that, regardless of the lack of any objections to the resettlement, they were not satisfied. On the other hand, families having registered residence in Belgrade knew most of the details of their resettlement, and they had received eviction notices, as well as written notice on location and date of resettlement. Protector of Citizens' impression was that the resettlement of the families was voluntary and that the residents of the settlement were satisfied that, after fifteen years of living in impossible conditions, as they said, they would be relocated to housing units with appropriate infrastructure.

Relocated families were provided with City of Belgrade's Secretariat for Inspection Affairs' records of enforcement of decisions through other parties. The records stated that the owners had been enabled to remove all necessary items from the structure, after which an inventory of movable property had been made. Records were signed by the members of the families, who were also informed of the registration plates of the trucks onto which their belongings had been loaded.

Personnel of the utility companies, who had been helped the residents of the settlement load their belongings onto one of the one hundred and ten trucks and buses,

started carrying out their duties at 08:30 hours. Weather conditions were good, the skies were clear, and the temperature was at around 25 degrees Celsius.

Doctors of the Emergency Department examined the residents prior to their taking places on the buses, and made a number of interventions, providing medical assistance to elderly people, pregnant women and children (a boy with head injuries was found, and was provided with emergency care and transported to the hospital, accompanied by his parents). In the settlement, there were several persons with disabilities and a number of pregnant women that were under supervision of the doctors of the Emergency Department, but no special medical assistance was provided

Transportation and packing of the belongings was provided for all families. Buses and trucks were marked with names of the relevant settlements or cities and municipalities to which the families were being relocated. Timetables were established, and first the transportation of families to Belgrade municipalities was performed, followed by transportation to other municipalities and cities across Serbia. Prior to transportation of the families, representatives of the Secretariat verified whether all families were present on the buses for the planned resettlement locations. Transportation was carried out under supervision of one representative of the Secretariat. Despite a large number of buses and trucks for transportation of the relocated people's belongings, waiting extended to the afternoon hours, so certain amount of anxiousness was detected in people waiting for several hours for departure. During the packing of their belongings, families were assisted by the personnel of utility companies, and the representatives of the Secretariat for Inspection Affairs were present and taking inventory of the belongings. In addition, one member of each family was present when their belongings were loaded onto the trucks.



During the course of resettlement, no representatives of the Secretariat were making records of persons having no identification documents or healthcare booklets, but the representatives of the Protector of Citizens were informed that such records would be made upon the families' arrival to mobile housing units. Also, it seemed that the residents had already been informed of the procedures for obtaining such documents.

Veterinary departments made records of dogs and other pets in the informal settlement and obtained information on their owners. Recorded pets were transported by veterinary departments' vehicles to their owners' resettlement locations.

After the relocation of the residents from the informal settlement, after 16:00 hours, utility companies started with the demolition of structures intended for removal from this location, by utility companies' personnel entering each structure, verifying that no people or belongings left behind were there and only then demolishing such structures.

At 19:00 hours, associates of the Protector of Citizens made a final visit to the settlement. In the parts of the informal settlement that were not relocated, where the residents whose relocation was planned for September 2012 remained, there were usual activities. The relocated part of the settlement was empty and the structures had been demolished, but the demolished structures were not removed from the location. Such situation was also detected on 27 April, at 08:15 hours, when the associates of the Protector of Citizens visited the population that had not been relocated and established that no demolished structure had been removed from the relocated parts of the settlement.

III.2. Accommodation in newly formed settlements in Belgrade

At the five newly formed settlements in Belgrade municipalities of Cukarica, Obrenovac, Palilula and Rakovica, 487 residents of the informal settlement, or 124 families, were relocated. Accommodation of the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville" at the newly formed settlements was carried out upon approval of the majority of relocated residents. A small number of them at the "Jabucki rit" settlement refused to take the keys to the containers, because they found that the settlements to which they were relocated were too far from the city, preventing them from collecting recyclable materials which had been their sole means of subsistence. They were informed that they could file a request with the City's Secretariat for Social Protection for transfer to other settlements. As the relocated people started to move in, there were no protests and objections from the local population, even though the security for people arriving to settlements in Resnik and "Dren" in Obrenovac was also provided by a private agency, in addition to the police.

III.2.1. Belgrade Municipality of Cukarica, "Makis" settlement:

Three buses with families from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" and the trucks carrying their belongings arrived to "Makis" settlement at 10:15 hours,

while the fourth bus arrived at 12:20 hours. As the first Roma families arrived, two teams of Emergency Department also arrived. In the settlement, the families were welcomed by members of “Cukarica Red Cross”, providing them with food packages and sanitary packages, Municipal Police, members of the Ministry of the Interior, representatives of the Cukarica Centre for Social Care, healthcare mediator and representatives of the City’s Secretariat for Social Protection. Representatives of the Centre for Social Care talked with the families, informing them that they visit the Makis settlement on Friday, 27 April, in order to provide information on exercise of right soup kitchen services and financial assistance. Healthcare mediator informed the families that the nursing care personnel of the local “Health Centre” would visit the settlement on Friday, 27 April, in mediator’s presence, in order to start keeping healthcare records and especially focus on children’s vaccination and pregnant women, of which there were eight, one being close to delivery. Representatives of the City’s Secretariat for Social Protection delivered the keys to housing units immediately after the family representatives had signed the copy of the delivery records. Belongings were assigned from the trucks based on the record made on evacuation from the informal settlement, and such belongings were unloaded by utility companies’ personnel. No objections with respect to transportation of belongings were recorded.

Moving into the housing units, i.e. their unlocking, delivery of keys and records of delivery were based on a previously determined schedule, but were not adjusted to the special needs of certain individuals. Representatives of the Protector of Citizens pointed out the need for women in advanced stages of pregnancy



to be accommodated in a housing unit earlier than scheduled, but were told that the established sequence could not be deviated from.

The settlement, positioned next to a similar container settlement, is located twelve kilometres from the city centre and is well connected to other parts of Belgrade by means of public transport. The infrastructure within the settlement was satisfactory – electricity was distributed to the housing units, with only a few lacking electricity, which was resolved by the power distribution company's personnel on the spot; street lighting was installed; the area where the housing units had concrete surface. Housing units were not furnished, and had laminate flooring. Eight sanitary units were installed, each having two sanitary connections, one shower enclosure, two washbasins and mirrors. A tap was installed on the outside of the sanitary units. Before the residents moved in, personnel of the JKP "Beogradski vodovod i kanalizacija" provided water supply.

There were no incidents on arrival, and all families were voluntarily accommodated in the housing units.

III.2.2. Belgrade Municipality of Palilula, "Jabucki rit" settlement:

The accommodation of families in container housing units in the "Jabucki rit" settlement started at 12:45 hours under the supervision of Secretariat for Social Protection. Immediately upon their arrival, all residents included in the list of relocated persons were assigned with housing units. The accommodation was carried out in accordance with previously determined list. In the settlement, 22 families were relocated. Two families refused the keys and left, six families did not even appear. The families that refused to move in (one family of two and one family of one) stated the distance from the rest of the city as reasons. This settlement is located around thirty kilometres from the Belgrade city centre and is connected by means of public transport. Container settlement was built with appropriate infrastructure, next to the local households. The school, kindergarten, clinic, stores and the centre of the "Jabucki rit" settlement are located two hundred metres from the container settlement. The associates of the Protector of Citizens were told by the families' representatives that they had been informed of their relocation to this location, but that they had not known its distance from the rest of the city until they had arrived. The families were advised to file a request for transfer with the City's Secretariat for Social Protection.

Municipal police coordinated the activities of the utility companies' personnel unloading the belongings from trucks to the containers, and the representatives of the Red Cross provided the arriving residents with food packages and sanitary packages. Representatives of the Centre for Social Care, Palilula Division – Elderly and Adult Department, talked with each family and collected information related to their social situation. At the same time, the relocated residents were informed of their right to financial assistance and where to apply for soup kitchen services. Healthcare mediator from the Municipality of Palilula collected information from persons having no healthcare

booklets. Emergency Department personnel were present throughout the course of resettlement, providing medical assistance in two instances, to a pregnant woman and a person having high blood pressure. In both instances, after the medical assistance was provided, residents were advised to undergo treatment in a stationary hospital, but both patients refused it, stating they were feeling better from the assistance provided.

The approach of all departments providing for accommodation of these families was professional, with full protection of human rights.

Nevertheless, a failure was identified, since the families did not receive inventory of belongings, but instead were required to remember the registration plates of the trucks where their belongings were placed. Several residents claimed their belongings had been damaged during the transportation.

After talking to relocated residents, a conclusion was reached that they had no complaints with respect to the procedure and course of resettlement, but expressed concern with respect to the settlement's distant location and opportunities for providing subsistence, since most of them survived by collecting recyclable materials, which was made much more difficult after the relocation. Representatives of the Protector of Citizens informed them that their full integration would be the responsibility of the city administration, as previously stated by the City representatives at the preparations for relocation of the informal settlement.



III.2.3. Belgrade Municipality of Rakovica, “Brdo Rakovica” settlement (Resnik)

The accommodation of the relocated families in this settlement, with 22 housing units installed, started around 14:00 hours and was supervised and coordinated by relevant city departments and public utility companies. A private security agency, hired by the City, was present and it stayed in the settlement after the departure of relevant departments and representatives of the Protector of Citizens. It is assumed that the security agency was present because of the protests organized by the residents of Resnik, opposing the resettlement of Roma population to this location. Nevertheless, the accommodation of relocated residents did not result in any objections or gathering of local population. During the course of accommodation of relocated residents, the members of the private security agency were accompanied by members of the Ministry of Interior who did not take any actions, which were not needed.

Associates of the Protector of Citizens established that in this settlement too there was no inventory of relocated residents' belongings.

Representatives of the Centre for Social Care informed the families of their right to one-time assistance and regular financial assistance, right to a meal at the soup kitchen and other social protection rights.

The relocated families were anxious about the settlement's distance from the rest of the city, despite their claims that the living conditions were incomparably better than the ones they had had in the informal settlement located next to “Belville”, they



were afraid how the local residents of Resnik would accept them and how would they perform the activities needed for providing subsistence.

III.2.4. Belgrade Municipality of Obrenovac, “Dren” settlement

The relocated families arrived to “Dren” settlement at around 15:00 hours. Their reception to the settlement was provided by the representatives of the relevant city secretariat for social protection, Obrenovac Centre for Social Care, “Beograd put” and “Beogradski vodovod i kanalizacija”, the Police, Municipal Police, Emergency Department, Red Cross. **Conduct of the personnel from such authorities and departments was appropriate, especially the actions of the members of municipal police, while certain hostility towards the residents was at times demonstrated by the representative of the Obrenovac Centre for Social Care.** Regardless of that, representative of the Obrenovac Centre for Social Care informed the relocated residents that the Centre would issue decisions and disburse one-time financial assistance upon identification of the arriving residents.

In this settlement, the residents were provided with records of delivery of belongings, which they signed. There were no objections to with respect to resettlement.

However, the location where the settlement is organized is inaccessible, surrounded on two sides by large swamps and located next to a regional road to Banjani, and in front of the settlement, along the road, there is a ditch filled with water. Housing units are placed too close to each other. As the ground where the containers are placed is flooded with water, the personnel of the city’s utility companies made an attempt at remediation by covering it with crushed stone, but the water kept seeping through. Above some of the containers, a power line was placed unsuitably low, while it was elevated between the rest of the containers.

None of the local population attended the arrival, but there were also no objections to it. In addition to the members of police, members of a private security agency were also present in the settlement.

Upon their arrival, the relocated families complained about the location’s inaccessibility and distance. After talking to representatives of the relevant city secretariat for social protection, including minor disagreements and explanations, the housing units were allocated accordingly. Eight citizens failed to appear in the settlement, and the Protector of Citizens was informed that two of them would arrive subsequently.

III.2.5. Belgrade Municipality of Rakovica, “Kijevo” settlement:

The families arrived to the settlement at 14:30 hours, under supervision of the Secretariat for Social Protection whose members delivered them the keys to housing units. For that purpose, members of the families signed records of delivery of mobile housing units, and were also informed that they would enter into an agreement on

their use soon. Representatives of the Municipality verified the condition of the housing units and noted the defects that needed to be remedied (electricity, fuses...). The relocated families received the record of delivery of belongings, except for one family that claimed that a piece of their furniture had been lost during transportation. After moving in the housing units, all families received printed house rules and regulations of the settlement.

The families' moving into the housing units was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Interior of the Rakovica Police Station, municipal police, City's Centre for Social Care – Rakovica Division, Municipality of Rakovica, Red Cross, JKP "Gradska cistoca" and the healthcare mediator. Representatives of the Centre for Social Care handed out to the relocated Roma population notices containing information on addresses of the Centre for Social Care and soup kitchen. They were also informed that the representatives of the Centre would visit the settlement's residents in order to inform them of their rights and means of exercising such rights before the Centre for Social Care. Healthcare mediator visited all arriving families and informed that she would visit the settlement next day accompanied by nursing care personnel and doctors of the Health Centre. Representatives of the Red Cross provided all arriving families with sanitary packages and food packages.

Since Roma population has been living in this settlement for several years, water supply, electricity and sewerage have been provided. There are twelve taps and seven sanitary units within the settlement. Housing units were not furnished. Also, a store, bus, tram, soup kitchen, as well as Centre for Social Care, are located near the settlement.

III.3. Reception of the population relocated from the Roma settlement located next to "Belville" in Nis, Leskovac and Vranje

As it was already explained, under the "Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement", resettlement and integration of the relocated residents are the responsibility of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. As the Ministry failed to act accordingly, the residents were relocated to nine municipalities instead of twenty seven, as previously planned. Protector of Citizens' teams consisting of two members observed the actions of the relevant authorities in Vranje, Nis and Leskovac. In addition to these cities, Roma population was relocated or returned to the cities of Novi Sad, Sabac and Pozarevac, as well as the municipalities of Prokuplje, Bojnik and Lebane.

III.3.1. Leskovac:

Representatives of the city administration and the Centre for Social Care in Leskovac informed the associates of Protector of Citizens, on 26 April, that they had held one meeting related to the relocation of the Roma population from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" to Leskovac with the representatives of the City of Belgrade,

and that there had been no talks with government authorities in that respect. It was especially noted that the meeting with representatives of Belgrade's city administration had not resulted in any clear conclusions related to the manner and time of relocation, required funds for providing care and integration of the relocated population and the authorities that would provide such funds.

It was established that the representatives of the local authorities in Leskovac were not aware of the exact number of families and persons returning to the City of Leskovac, as their registered place of residence. City administration requested information on such persons' residence from the police, but did not receive such information by the time of the meeting with representatives of the Protector of Citizens. However, there was unofficial, oral information that "the situation was chaotic", because some persons had personal identification numbers assigned in other countries, while others had personal identification numbers that were not assigned in Leskovac. Representatives of the City of Leskovac stated that they had information that the Roma families had not cooperated in a proper manner in the process of collecting information, that they had declined to disclose or gave incorrect information on personal identification numbers, registered place of residence, origin and property. **Also, representatives of the Leskovac local authorities relied on an unverified information that the majority of relocated population had relatives in Leskovac, hoping that the relatives would accept them if they were provided with appropriate financial assistance.**

The City intended to accommodate the people that had no property in Leskovac or were not accepted by their relatives at "Juzni logor" army barracks, but since it did not request approval of the Ministry of Defence, the families could have been accommodated at such facilities. At 16:30 hours, representatives of the City of Leskovac still had no solution for the emergency accommodation for families that were, at that very moment, on their way to Leskovac.

The bus with Roma families arrived at 20:35 hours, and was welcomed by the representatives of the City of Leskovac, Centre for Social Care and members of the police. Forty-four people, or thirteen families, arrived by bus to Leskovac, **twenty-seven, or eight families, of which needed to be provided with accommodation**, whereas the remaining seventeen people had a place to stay. In addition to these families that were expected, two families arrived that had not been on the list prepared by the Belgrade's city administration during the course of resettlement, and the city representatives expressed their willingness to provide temporary accommodation for the two families as well.

Associates of the Protector of Citizens were informed that temporary accommodation for two days, until the provision of suitable emergency accommodation, was provided at the "Mimi" hostel at the centre of Leskovac. It was said that the city would most probably issue a decision on lease of a house where the families would be accommodated. Roma families were provided with water and food.

In direct contact with the relocated population, representatives of the City, Centre for Social Care and Leskovac Police Administration acted in a professional manner,

showing willingness to listen to the families and provide assistance to them. Police had no reason for action, nor did it act, and it only accompanied the convoy on its way from the place it arrived to the hostel.

In direct contact with the families, representatives of the Secretariat of the protector of Citizens found that the people were calm and not unhappy about the relocation. They expressed concern about the way they would earn income and whether they would receive any assistance from the City of Leskovac, but they pointed out that the relocation was better for their future.

III.3.2. Nis:

The people relocated from the settlement located next to “Belville” who had registered residence in Nis started to move in at around 19:30 hours. For this purpose, the families were assisted by four employees of the Centre for Social Care and a member of the City Council. The relevant personnel were present throughout the process, from the arrival of the buses and their redirection to the planned locations to the arrival of truck carrying belongings at around 21:00 hours. They talked with the present Roma population, answered their questions and explained the procedure to them, as well as the manner in which they could exercise their rights. They were extremely helpful, tolerant and forthcoming, and they knew some of the returnees as beneficiaries of the services of Centre for Social Care. Police appeared one hour after the relocated families arrived and one police officer claimed that they had not been informed of the families’ arrival and that they came after a citizen’s report, but also that they would have been present for preventive reasons had they been timely informed of the resettlement. Police treated the relocated people appropriately, without using force. Upon their arrival, the residents were provided with water and food items.

As temporary accommodation, the city authorities provided a housing facility and the area where a farm had previously been situated which, in the meantime went bankrupt and the facilities once again became the ownership of the City of Nis. The building was located near the “Stocni trg” Roma settlement, at 5 Daniciceva St. This was a single-story building, made of a solid material, consisting of two large rooms and one small one. The building had one more small room, but it was locked and not intended to be used by the relocated families. The rooms were dry, relatively clean, with windows and doors, except for one room without windows. The floor was concrete, except in the small room where there were tiles on the floor. The small room was more neat and suitable for living, even though one could notice that all room were a little cold. In the largest room, consisting of approximately 50 m², there were ten beds with twenty new mattresses and twenty new blankets, provided on that day by the city authorities. In addition to that, various pieces of old office furniture (cabinets, tables and chairs) were piled in one part of the room. Electrical installations existed in the building, but were not

connected due to a voltage issue. This was to be provided for by means of a power generator. There were no water supply installations in the building. The city administration was to provide water by means of tank trucks. The yard contained one sanitary facility with water, but its hygienic condition was extremely poor. Several open manholes in the yard were covered with wooden boards from old unusable furniture.

The process of accommodation was carried out without any incidents, even though upon arrival certain relocated residents loudly voiced their discontent and threatened to sue because they were not provided with the furnished facilities that had been promised. Also, these residents demanded money because, as some of them claimed, they had been promised RSD 30,000. Only after several hours of talks with the representatives of the city authorities, and their promise that the City of Nis would pay them RSD 10,000 as one-time financial assistance, which it subsequently did, the present Roma population settled down. Majority of the arriving residents refused temporary accommodation and found other accommodation with relatives and friends, so that only three of the arriving twelve families, or thirty people, remained in the temporary accommodation.

Representatives of the city authorities were not satisfied with such resettlement of the Roma population because they expected discontent of the poor Roma population in Nis who would not receive mobile housing units, which were intended for the relocated residents. One is under the impression that the representatives of Nis city administration had not been appropriately informed by the relevant authorities about what is necessary to be provided for the persons arriving to Nis, especially the financial assistance.

III.3.3. Vranje

The bus with four multiple member families and two individuals, or 19 people, as well as the truck carrying their belongings arrived in Vranje at 22:30 hours, in front of the Centre for Development of Local Social Protection Services (shelter). At the shelter, the relocated people were greeted by the representatives of the City of Vranje, personnel of the Centre and representatives of the local nongovernmental organizations. No representative of the Vranje Centre for Social Care was present. The families were provided with food and water.

After talking to the families, it was determined that no one had any objections to the procedure for resettlement from Belgrade. The relocated families possessed decisions on resettlement and inventories of belongings. Some families expressed doubts with respect to Vranje Centre for Social Care because they had previously contacted it but had not received any assistance, which they claimed had been the reason for their moving to Belgrade.

III.4. Contacts of the Protector of Citizens with relocated families in other cities and municipalities

One day after the resettlement, on 27 April 2012, the Protector of Citizens was contacted by phone by the residents relocated to Sabac and Bojnik, who stated the problems occurring on their arrival to their place of residence.

A family of ten, from Sabac, arriving to this city on 26 April at around 19:00 hours, claimed that the bus had transported them to the Police Station, when an employee of the Centre for Social Care had been called and had told them that they would be provided with accommodation for one night and that on the following day they would receive money for tickets in order for them to return where they had come from. The family immediately returned to Belgrade and, as they informed the Protector of Citizens, they are located at Ustanicka Street. Also, a man called from Sabac, claiming that he was accommodated at a family house in the village of Maovi, near Sabac, where he claimed the living conditions were extremely poor and that he was planning on returning to Belgrade where, as he claimed, he had been living for the past thirty years. He contacted the Sabac Centre for Social Care, where he was paid RSD 5,000 and given a receipt, and where he was told that a one-time financial assistance in the amount of RSD 20,000 would be provided on Monday, 30 April 2012.

The families returned to Bojnik contacted the Protector of Citizens, claiming that that they had not received one-time financial assistance. The Protector of Citizens was afterwards contacted by a family of three, accommodated at the shelter in Novi Sad, claiming that the municipality of Zabalj, where they had registered residence, refused to provide them with emergency accommodation.

IV MONITORING OF THE RELOCATED ROMA POPULATION'S INTEGRATION

Inclusion of the relocated population into local communities is monitored by the Protector of Citizens both by maintaining permanent direct contact with them and based on its powers provided for under the Law and cooperation with public authorities. Since 26 April, Protector of Citizens has received nineteen complaints from the relocated population with respect to the exercise of their rights and the manner in which they were treated by certain public authorities. The most complaints are related to the manner in which they were treated by centres for social care when they applied for social welfare, by police administrations and stations when they applied for personal documents, by the registries with respect to issuing of certificates and making additional entries in such registers and finally, by local authorities with respect to providing for their accommodation issues.

Immediately after the relocation, associates of the Protector of Citizens conducted interviews with the population relocated to all Belgrade communities, as well as with the population relocated to Bojnik, Lebane and Prokuplje (7 May), Leskovac (7 May and 13 June), Novi Sad (30 April), Nis (4 May and 13 June), Vranje and Surdulica (12 June). In all of these cities and municipalities, interviews were conducted with representatives of local authorities, centres for social care and, if necessary, representatives of other relevant authorities that performed the resettlement.

IV.1. Issues related to the integration of families relocated to newly formed container-type settlements

Actions of relevant authorities with respect to integration of the Roma population relocated from the settlement located next to "Belville" have been provided for by the foregoing "Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement". This plan provides for the obligations of city authorities with respect to the integration of the population relocated to the newly formed Belgrade settlements: to continue their work on activities that were not completed before the relocation (personal documents, social welfare); to provide employment offers and appropriate training; to sign agreements with the families related to the use of the mobile housing units; to transfer medical records to the new healthcare centres and assist the persons with disabilities, persons with chronic conditions and pregnant women in applying to relevant healthcare

institutions for receiving appropriate medical assistance; to monitor their attendance in schools; to monitor their progress and report thereof; to organize individual meetings with respect to enrolment of children into schools, the exercise of rights to social protection, employment offers, training and other activities; to perform weekly visits to the newly formed settlements.

Based on direct monitoring of the exercise of rights in the newly formed settlements in Belgrade, Protector of Citizens has established that the city authorities have met most of their obligations provided for in the "Action Plan" and that the problems encountered by the residents of the settlements are addressed on a case by case basis. The situation is most complicated in the settlement of "Dren" in Obrenovac, which is spatially isolated and built on a land not fit for construction and sustainable infrastructure. At the meeting held by the Protector of Citizens with the representatives of city authorities on 9 May, at which the problems encountered after the relocation were addressed, it was stated that the population of this community would be relocated to other locations and that "Dren" settlement would be dismantled. The representatives of city authorities stated that this would be possible at the end of June, when the previously relocated sixteen families would be provided with social housing and that before this, three families would be relocated from "Dren" to "Jabucki Rit" after receiving approval of the Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade.

During interviews with the residents of the newly formed settlements in "Jabucki Rit", "Makis" and "Resnik" on 4 May, representatives of the Protector of Citizens were informed that the residents received meals irregularly and that they were not provided with personal care packages. Also, they pointed out to the Protector of Citizens that they did not receive appropriate support from the centres for social care and healthcare mediators, and that a number of the residents could not exercise their rights because they did not have personal documents. Most of such residents were displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija. In addition thereto, the residents of the newly formed settlements pointed out that they were given stoves, but that most of them had no refrigerators and their food went bad quickly, especially milk and baby food, which is difficult to keep at high temperatures. Most of them had no beds or any other furniture.

Public attention was attracted by an incident in "Jabucki Rit" on 1 May, caused by a group of young men who shouted and wrote racist slurs on one of the containers. According to the information received from the Ministry of the Interior, the perpetrators were found and proceedings were instituted against them by the prosecutor's office. After the incident in "Jabucki Rit", police was patrolling the location; however, as stated by the officers of the Ministry of the Interior who were encountered on site by the representatives of the Protector of Citizens, the need for their presence on site was gradually decreasing, since the newcomers had established good rapport with the local non-Roma and Roma population.

With respect to the safety of the population of this settlement, it was pointed out that they experienced incidents in the public transportation on their trips to get meals at the soup kitchen, which is located over ten kilometres away in Borca settlement.

Safety measures were also increased in the newly formed settlement in Resnik. In addition to the police patrols, private security members also patrolled the settlement. Precautions were taken because the original residents of Resnik staged protests before the Roma population was relocated from "Belville". However, the safety of newcomers was not compromised, and on the contrary, they stated that they established good rapport with the local population, which hired them to perform seasonal jobs and that the only problem, which was later resolved, occurred in connection with missing property of a local resident.

Protector of Citizens informed the representatives of the city authorities of these omissions and problems at the foregoing meeting held at 9 May, and requested that they remedy such omissions in the best interest of the relocated population. The representatives of the city authorities stated that they would take all actions in their powers in order to improve the current situation, but they requested understanding and patience because some of the procedures required certain amount of time regardless of the city authorities' efforts to take immediate action. At the meeting, Protector of Citizens was informed that, as of 9 May, the residents of all newly formed settlements would be provided with regular meals and that the soup kitchen would make meal deliveries to the population entitled thereto in accordance with legal requirements, whereas, those who did not yet apply for the receiving of meals from the soup kitchen for not having personal documents, would be provided with meals from a military institution. The City of Belgrade allocated RSD 600,000 from its budget for the costs of administrative fees and the forms for the persons without personal documents and it was expected that by the end of May all members of the population would have personal documents, which would enable them to apply for the meals at the soup kitchen. After that, the military institution would stop preparing meals and foreign citizens would forfeit the right for such meals.

Representatives of the Protector of Citizens interviewed the residents of the newly formed settlement and, on 14 June, they established that the residents were provided with meals at the soup kitchen in Borca, but also that most of them still did not have personal documents and that there were problems in the exercise of certain rights to social and health protection and to employment, i.e. options of earning money.

All residents repeated the statement that, despite the problems they encountered, their living conditions were significantly improved compared to the time when they were living in the informal settlement located next to "Belville".

At the same day, 14 June, associates of the Protector of Citizens also interviewed members of the Roma population who were relocated to Makis settlement, who also pointed out that their living conditions were significantly improved compared to the conditions at the informal settlement. However, in this settlement, there were problems with maintaining public order because good rapport was not established with the residents of the settlement, and during the last two months, police action was required several tens of times. The Settlement's "Code of Conduct", which was received by all the residents of the newly formed settlements after moving in, provided for the rules

which, among other things, contributed to the maintenance of public order. According to such rules, any person who was reprimanded three times by the Secretariat for Social Protection for causing disorder or disturbing other residents, shall lose his/her right to use the housing unit and other rights exercised by the residents of the settlement.

One should note that the associates of the Protector of Citizens established that the City of Belgrade organized regular transportation for the pupils attending classes at Novi Beograd schools; however, the preparation of children for enrolment into schools and for attending classes in school year of 2012/13 had not yet been organized.

According to information obtained by the Protector of Citizens, city administration is making efforts to ensure integration of the population relocated from the settlement located next to "Belville" and it is resolving problems as soon as they arise. However, results would be more efficient and even more specific, if the problems have been solved in accordance with the established activity plan and in cooperation with the relevant government authorities. Additionally, it is very important that the results of the improvement of the position of the Roma population are available and that the public is informed thereof in due time.

IV.2. Issues related to the integration of families relocated to municipalities outside Belgrade

A more complicated situation is related to the integration of the relocated residents into other municipalities in Serbia. As specified above, the Protector of Citizens has made interviews twice with the members of the relocated population and representatives of the local authorities in Vranje, Leskovac and Nis, and once in Novi Sad, Bojnik, Lebane, Prokuplje, Zabalj and the Municipality of Surdulica where a family, previously accommodated in Vranje on 26 April, was relocated. Members of the Roma population relocated to Sabac on 26 April have returned to Belgrade on their own initiative and informed the Secretariat for Social Protection and Protector of Citizens thereof and pointed out that their reason for leaving was that they did not receive appropriate support at the Centre for Social Care and that they were told to "go back where they came from". During interviews with the persons in charge at the foregoing local administrations, associates of the Protector of Citizens have established that this is a widely spread opinion and that most of interviewees think that their local administrations have no obligations toward the relocated population, regardless of the fact that their place of residence is in their city/municipality, and that such population should be accommodated by Belgrade authorities.

Protector of Citizens has established that there are three categories of the population relocated to the local administrations: the relocated population owning real property and with whom the local authorities establish contact solely through centres for social care; the second group are members of the relocated population whose accommodation was enabled through assistance of family and friends and whose inte-

gration is being monitored also through centres for social care, but it is not assisted to any great extent; and finally, the third group of families who are temporarily accommodated with the assistance of local authorities. During the first half of May, at the latest, each family received RSD 20,000 of one-time financial assistance provided by the City Administration of Belgrade. The families received one-time assistance from the local administrations as well. In Nis, immediately upon arrival, each family received one-time financial assistance in the amount of RSD 10,000 from the city administration, which was also the case in Leskovac. In addition, families owning real property not fit for living were each paid RSD 100,000 for urgent refurbishment of buildings, according to the lists provided by the Secretariat for Social Protection of Belgrade city administration. An exception to this is the city of Leskovac, which has not received such funds, because it is making efforts, in cooperation with the city administration in Belgrade, to provide a permanent solution to the housing issue of the Roma population who were returned to Leskovac as their place or permanent or temporary residence.

Even though Belgrade has met its obligation of providing financial assistance to the relocated families, which it undertook despite the "Action Plan for Resettlement of the Belville Informal Settlement", at the time when the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy did not support the process of resettlement and integration of the relocated population, **Protector of Citizens established that the problems encountered by the relocated population and the local authorities require support of the relevant state authorities, careful planning and institutional coordination of activities.**

The problems encountered by most local municipalities where the residents of the settlement located next to "Belville" were relocated, are poverty and the local authorities' lack of funds to mitigate the effects of poverty. In all such local municipalities, there are many citizens who have spent several months, even years, waiting for approval of some form of assistance by the local administration with respect to housing issues, debts to utility companies and employment. Giving priority to providing for the returnees under the scope of emergency procedures causes discontent of the citizens, most of which are members of the Roma population, who are also living in residential buildings under poor conditions, who are unemployed and who encounter the same integration challenges as the returnees.

In addition, returnees cannot be fully integrated without taking systemic actions to financially strengthen the families, which include employment, active participation in public work, various subsidies and providing for issues related to living and education. In its research of the implementation of the "Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia", Protector of Citizens established that there is no systemic method of implementing the actions provided for by the "Strategy" in the local municipalities. None of the actions provided for by the "Strategy" and by the action plan for implementation of such actions was fully implemented and effected in the way it guaranteed implementation of the strategic aim – improvement of the position of the Roma population.

In order to ensure at least partial implementation of such actions, it is necessary that the relevant government authorities perform the existing obligations

provided for by the “Strategy”. With respect to the issue of relocation of the residents of the informal settlement located next to “Belville”, it has been established that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy did not conduct activities related to the integration of the relocated Roma population in the local municipalities; that the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government did not coordinate the work of state authorities during resettlement and that it did not carry out the Recommendation of the Protector of Citizens under which it was required to form a workgroup that would monitor relocation of the residents of informal settlements and prepare a document under which the local municipalities would act during resettlements of informal, impoverished settlements; Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning did not identify the housing needs of the Roma population or generate an appropriate data base, which would enable planning and implementation of activities in connection with providing for the housing issues of the impoverished Roma population.

It has also been established that, as a result of such condition, local authorities generally have no plans for the integration of the local Roma population, and more specifically, that none of the nine local municipalities where the Roma population was relocated from the settlement located next to “Belville” have a local strategy or an action plan for integration of the Roma population, and also that the existing solutions provided under the law do not have efficient methods for addressing the issues of the integration of the impoverished Roma population. In connection to the relocation of the population from the settlement located next to “Belville”, this is evident in the fact that there was no clearly outlined plan to permanently address the housing issue of any of the families. In addition, urgent financial assistance for addressing the housing issue was provided to the families owning real estates, but not to the persons for whom care could not be provided without institutional assistance. At the Municipality of Bojnik, out of 58 families that were returned from Belgrade, most of them were provided with some sort of financial assistance and it is assumed that afterwards, those families left this municipality again. Members of the Roma population pointed out that the main obstacle to their integration in the local community was the lack of the possibility to earn their living. All the interviewed families, whether they were the ones who were relocated in or out of Belgrade, pointed out that the basis of their integration is to address their employment issue.

Certain local administrations demonstrated extreme disorganization and lack of care related to the reception of the relocated population. Protector of Citizens has instituted proceedings for establishing the facts in connection with omissions that may have been made toward the city authorities in Leskovac and Vranje, as well as in Surdulica and Zabalj, which have obligations toward two families with members having their place of residence within the territories of these municipalities. Proceedings were also instituted against the Sabac city administration, because the Roma population that was relocated to this city came across unprofessional members of the administration who told them to “go back where they came from”, and also, proceedings were instituted

against the municipal administration in Prokuplje. At the time when the Protector of Citizens performed monitoring of the actions of the local authorities, the municipal authorities were unprepared for the interview and had no information on the locations where the relocated families were accommodated. Centre for Social Care in Prokuplje was not informed of the reception of the families and, according to the head of city administration, one employee of the Police Administration was in charge for the reception of the relocated population.

It should be specified that certain local administrations experienced problems also because the load of resettlement was borne by Belgrade and other nine cities and municipalities, which was not planned. Specifically, according to the notifications received by the Protector of Citizens from Belgrade's city administration; however, based on inspection of the communication of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy informing the centres for social care that Belgrade would relocate the families from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" to the places of residence of the family members, it can be concluded that it was planned to perform the relocation into twenty seven municipalities. Subsequently, after the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy abandoned the intention to carry out integration of the relocated population, these tasks were taken on by the representatives of Belgrade's city administration, who provided, in cooperation with nine cities and municipalities, the conditions for the return of the residents of the settlement. The largest portion this was borne by the Belgrade municipalities and the City of Belgrade, as well as the municipalities in Serbia, such as Bojnik, where, instead of 44 families, 58 families or 245 persons were returned.

Apart from the families having real property, Leskovac provided accommodation for four families having multiple members, which had no real property. In addition to the monitoring of their reception at 26 April, Protector of Citizens monitored the actions taken by the relevant local authorities on 7 May and 13 June. It was established that the city administration of Leskovac was experienced in providing care for and addressing issues of returnees, because it successfully addressed the issue of integration of returnees relocated from the informal settlement under the "Gazela" Bridge, with the assistance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, international organizations and the administration of the City of Belgrade.

However, when the families from the settlement located next to "Belville" were being provided for, omissions were noted, which was indicated by the Protector of Citizens at the meeting on 14 June. These families have been accommodated at the "Mimi" hostel since 26 April, which represented excellent conditions but which was also financially unfeasible and unsustainable. Accommodation costs as of 14 June amounted to over RSD one million. During this time, representatives of the city administration did not carry out necessary activities to find a sustainable solution for these families. For example, monthly lease of a rural household in the territory of Leskovac amounts up to RSD 25,000, whereas its purchase amounts to approximately RSD 600,000. Representatives of the city administration stated several reasons for which they decided to provide accommodation at a hostel – the main reason was that the City had no available housing

facilities for emergency accommodation, and that it did not obtain approval from the Serbian Army to accommodate the relocated population at the abandoned army barracks, as well as that the City was not able to fully provide for the integration of returnees without the aid of the relevant ministries. A special problem is the discontent of the other impoverished citizens of Leskovac to whom emergency accommodation was not approved.

The members of the Roma population relocated from the settlement located next to "Belville" who are temporarily accommodated at "Mimi" hostel are aware that their existing accommodation is not sustainable and they stated that they would accept any suggestion of the city authorities, provided, however, that they are legally assured that their housing issue would be permanently resolved. A few of the members of the population in this facility have no personal documents or have not been entered into the relevant registers. Based on the examined documents and the information received at the Centre for Social Care, Protector of Citizens is of the opinion that, with dedicated work of the employees at the register department of the city administration and direct implementation of regulations, most of these issues could be addressed without instituting the proceedings that has been instituted by this authority.

One should particularly point out the extremely difficult position of the relocated families in the city of Nis. The families who did not own any real property or were provided for by the city authorities, **had no water or electricity even fifty days after their arrival to the temporary accommodation near the settlement of "Stocni trg"**. Representatives of the city administration and the Centre for Social Care informed the protector of Citizens of the problem of the lack of temporary accommodation facilities and stated that they expected that the City of Belgrade would provide containers for the accommodation of the families in Nis. Protector of Citizens is of the opinion that providing emergency accommodation means that water and electricity must be available.

The problems of the integration of returnees also exist in other local municipalities, and the typical cases are the cases of families relocated to the local municipalities in which they have no permanent/temporary residence. A family of three members having their place of residence in Zabalj was relocated to Novi Sad, and two families having their place of residence in Surdulica were relocated to Vranje. Based on performed monitoring, the Protector of Citizens established that the cities of Novi Sad and Vranje were unwilling to take on the responsibility of integration of these families, because their opinion was that this would cause discontent of the local Roma population and therefore they directed the families to establish their rights in the municipalities where they had permanent residence. On the other hand, these municipalities have no obligations towards these families because they are addressing priority issues of the members of impoverished population, especially Roma population. This situation also indicates the problem which would probably not have occurred if the city authorities, and primarily the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, have acted in accordance with their relevant authority.

V INITIATIVE OF THE CITY OF BELGRADE AND THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR PROVISION OF FUNDS NECESSARY FOR ADDRESSING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE RELOCATED ROMA POPULATION IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

Belgrade's city administration and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government started an initiative, which should contribute to providing a permanent solution to the housing issue of the Roma population relocated from the settlement located next to "Belville", as well as of the families previously relocated from "Gazela" settlement in Block 72 in Novi Beograd and other settlements.

At the meetings held in late May 2012 with respect to this issue, the foregoing public authorities informed the present state authorities (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, Commissariat for Refugees, National Employment Office, Social Housing Agency, Protector of Citizens etc.) and representatives of international organizations (Delegation of the European Union in Serbia, OSCE, OHCHR, UNHCHR, UNDP, SIDA...) that they were starting this initiative with a "special aim to assist the City Administration and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government in the implementation of needs analysis and feasibility study of the suitability of the locations in Belgrade and other selected municipalities in Serbia to which the Roma families were temporarily relocated after their resettlement from "Belville" settlement and other settlements in Belgrade, or in order to find other permanent solutions for those families" and that "the following special aim is to prepare a recommendation for an appropriate approach to promote the coordination and participation of the Roma population in the planning and implementation of the policy of inclusion of the Roma population and the program of the City Administration".

The initiators explained that they would analyse, with professional assistance, the condition and the needs of all local municipalities to which the members of the Roma population were relocated from both the settlement located next to "Belville" and from the previous resettlements, and that based on the established results, they would prepare **"project documents for providing assistance to approximately 220 families from Belville"**.

Protector of Citizens supports any initiative that would contribute to the implementation of actions for improving the position of the Roma population and it is ready to provide assistance, to the extent of its capability, to the City Administration and the Ministry in achieving the aims they presented. However, this

initiative would be the example of a good and responsible administration if it had been started by the relevant authorities before the informal impoverished settlements were relocated, and if the authorities had immediately, in good faith and at the population's best interest and in accordance with the obligations provided for by the law and the "Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma", implemented the Recommendation of the Protector of Citizens, which was given during relocation of the residents of the informal settlement in Block 72. In addition, in order for this initiative to be effective, it is evidently necessary to redefine one of its aims - the "preparation of recommendations related to an appropriate approach in order to improve the coordination and participation of the Roma population in the planning and implementation of the policy of inclusion of the Roma population and the program of the City Administration", with respect to achieving administration's efficiency in addressing the issues because of which the initiative was started in the first place, because the essence of the administration's work is to pass regulations and implement actions for improving the position of the members of the population and the exercise of their rights.

VI DETERMINATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON MONITORING OF RELOCATION AND INTEGRATION OF THE RESIDENTS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENT LOCATED NEXT TO “BELVILLE”

Determination

During the course of monitoring of public authorities' actions with respect to re-settlement of the residents of the informal settlement located next to “Belville” and the protection of human rights of the residents relocated from this settlement, the Protector of Citizens has determined the following:

- Despite the fact that in accordance with the Law on Ministries and the “Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma” of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy** is under obligation to provide for, among other things, the integration of the Roma population in the local community, this ministry neither took any action during the course of re-settlement of the Roma population from the informal settlement located next “Belville”, nor did it take any part in the integration of the relocated population in the local communities to which they were relocated.

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy takes selective action with respect to the integration of Roma population into the local communities, which causes legal and social uncertainty of the population and prevents planning of the integration after actions are taken in order to improve the position of the members of this especially vulnerable ethnic and social group. When the resettlement started, the Ministry was active and it informed the centres for social care in twenty seven municipalities that they needed to prepare for reception of the residents of settlement located next to “Belville” who had places of residence in such municipalities, but after this, it stopped participating in resettlement and integration of the relocated population on its own accord. Also, upon carrying out of the proceedings instituted against the City Administration of Novi Pazar with respect to improvement of living conditions in the informal settlement of “Blazevo”, mostly inhabited by Roma population displaced from Kosovo and Metohija, the Protector of Citizens established that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy did not take any actions and that, considering the fact that several state authorities participated in this procedure, it must have received information of the issues related to integration of the Roma population in Novi Pazar. In contrast

thereto, the Ministry acted professionally and efficiently during relocation of the Roma population from the informal settlement under "Gazela" Bridge.

- By failing to promptly implement the Recommendation of the Protector of Citizens related to the formation of an official workgroup that would monitor relocation of informal settlements and prepare a regulation under which the local municipalities would act during relocation thereof, the **Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government** contributed to the problems encountered during relocation of the residents of the informal settlement located next to "Belville".
- During the course of preparations for the resettlement, the **Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade** failed to organize more consultations with the residents and thereby provide them with timely notifications and collect information that are significant for providing a more efficient organization of resettlement and especially for the protection of human rights.

The Secretariat failed to contribute to a more efficient problem solving and human rights protection by more careful planning and better monitoring of the status of the relocated population, especially in other municipalities.

- **City administration of Nis** made an omission because it did not provide emergency accommodation with available water and electricity for the relocated families.
- **Municipal administration of Prokuplje** on 26 April failed to inform the Centre for Social Care to prepare emergency accommodation and to make preparations for provision of care for nineteen families that were relocated on the same day from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" to Prokuplje, as the family members' registered place of permanent/temporary residence.
- By failing to act promptly and efficiently and provide appropriate emergency accommodation to the relocated families, **city administration of Leskovac** put the process of their overall integration at risk.

Recommendations

Pursuant to Article 31, paragraph 2 and Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Law on the Protector of Citizens and based on information collected during the interviews with authorized representatives of Belgrade's city administration, city administrations in Vranje, Leskovac, Nis and municipal administration in Prokuplje, facts obtained through direct supervision of the exercise of rights of the population relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" and proceedings instituted against the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government with respect to implementation of the "Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma" of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Protector of Citizens issues the following recommendations:

To the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

- *The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in accordance with the provision of the Law on Ministries under which, among other things, it is required to conduct state administration affairs related to Roma population's integration into local communities, shall develop relevant organization, financial and professional capacities in order to conduct these activities required by Law in a professional manner and in the best interest of citizens.*
- *It shall prepare an internal regulation providing, in a clear manner, for its competencies and actions related to the Roma population's integration activities.*
- *It shall immediately prepare a plan of integration of the Roma population relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" into the local community, in association with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government and Belgrade's city administration.*
- *It shall collect from the city and municipality centres for social care information on the status of the Roma population relocated from informal settlement located next to "Belville" and on the issues related to their in-*

tegration, and take active part in resolving the identified problems, in accordance with its powers and in association with other government authorities.

To the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government

- *The Ministry shall immediately implement the Recommendation of the Protector of Citizens, reference number 16-3028/11, filed under no. 24882, dated 5 December 2011, and form a “standing workgroup for monitoring and coordination of government authorities’ activities related to future relocation of informal Roma settlements, taking into consideration that the relocation represents a basis for initiating the process of social integration of such settlements’ residents, as provided under the ‘Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma’ of the Government of the Republic of Serbia” and “prepare regulations providing more closely for the obligations and actions of government authorities in the events of forced evictions of informal settlements and propose enactment thereof to the Government of the Republic of Serbia”.*

To the Belgrade City Administration, Secretariat for Social Protection

- *Secretariat for Social Protection of the Belgrade City Administration shall in its future operation plan and prepare relocation of informal settlements more carefully, taking special care of protection of human rights and integration of the relocated population.*
- *Since it has assumed responsibilities related to relocation and integration of the Roma population from the informal settlement located next to “Belville” into the local communities outside of Belgrade as well, the Secretariat shall take all actions necessary to facilitate such process and shall notify the relevant government authorities in charge of Roma population’s integration activities thereof, in order for them to take actions within their powers.*

To the Nis City Administration

- *Nis City Administration shall immediately provide emergency accommodation for the families relocated from the informal settlement located next to “Belville” that is in compliance with the human rights protection*

standards and it shall prepare a plan for their permanent integration into the local community.

To the Municipal Administration in Prokuplje

- *Municipal Administration in Prokuplje shall immediately prepare a plan of permanent integration of the Roma population relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" into the local community.*
- *The relevant authorities in the municipal administration in Prokuplje shall investigate the reason why the Prokuplje Centre for Social Care was not informed that, on 26 April, nineteen residents having registered temporary/permanent residence in Prokuplje, relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville", were being relocated from Belgrade to Prokuplje, and shall take necessary actions in the event they establish individual responsibility of the employees of municipal administration.*

To the Leskovac City Administration

- *Leskovac City Administration shall immediately prepare a plan of permanent integration of the Roma population relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" into the local community.*
- *The relevant authorities in the Leskovac City Administration shall investigate the responsibility of the relevant employees of city administration for unreasonable and uneconomic actions related to provision of emergency accommodation to the Roma population relocated from the informal settlement located next to "Belville" and shall take necessary actions in the event they establish individual responsibility of the employees of municipal administration.*

Government authorities to which the recommendations are issued shall notify the Protector of Citizens no later than 60 days from the receipt thereof of the actions taken upon such recommendations or reasons for failing to act thereupon, whereas the local communities shall do so no later than 30 days from the receipt thereof.

