

IOM continues supporting the return of the ethnic minority communities in Pejë/Pec Municipality



Reconstruction of the houses in summer of 2005
in the ethnic Serbian village of Brestovik

The European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) has recently funded a continuation of IOM's successful intervention supporting the return of internally displaced ethnic Serbian families to the Pejë/Pec region. From its inception, the project, which had been previously funded by the Government of Italy, was conceived and implemented as an innovative undertaking. IOM demonstrated that it is possible to implement a returns project in an area like the Pejë/Peć region by following strategies that focus on inter-community dialog activities, which allow the creation of mutual confidence between the communities.

Beginning in September 2003, IOM assisted with the sustainable return and reintegration of 90 IDP Kosovo Serbian families in the Pejë/Pec region. The return process was achieved through a combination of different activities including: the assessment of the IDPs for readiness to return; site preparation at the return locations; reconstruction of housing and community infrastructure; balancing projects for reconciling with the neighboring populations; and measures to support the longer-term socio-economic reintegration of the IDPs. Specifically, the project facilitated the sustainable return of 90 families in total, with 49 families returning to the village of Brestovik, 23 to Siga/ë and 18 families to Ljevosa/Levoshë village by November 2005. The project's income-generating component assisted in the establishment of 77 new small businesses, which resulted in the creation of 79 new employment positions. These positions indirectly benefited an additional 426 people who are dependants of the owners or workers.

The continuation of this IOM project intends to contribute to the sustainable return and reintegration of an additional 40 ethnic Serbian IDP families - representing approximately 200 people who are currently displaced in Serbia and Montenegro to the villages of Siga/ë, Brestovik, Levoša/Levoshë.