

# Social Housing in Serbia



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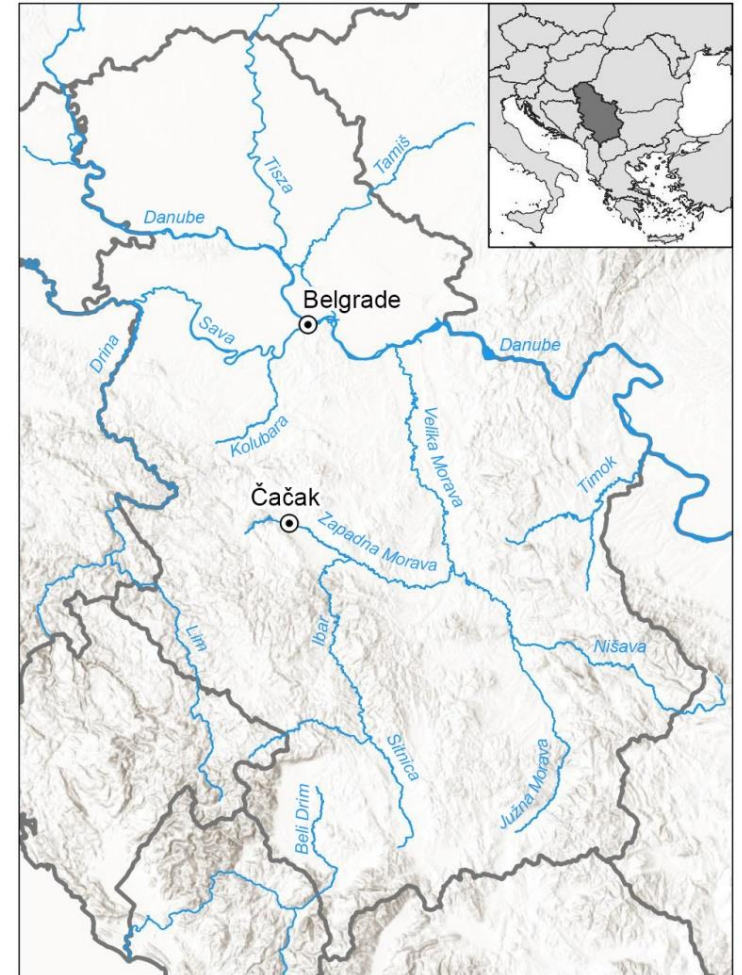
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

**DASH - Deliver sAfe and Affordable Housing**

21-23 August 2023, Aalborg

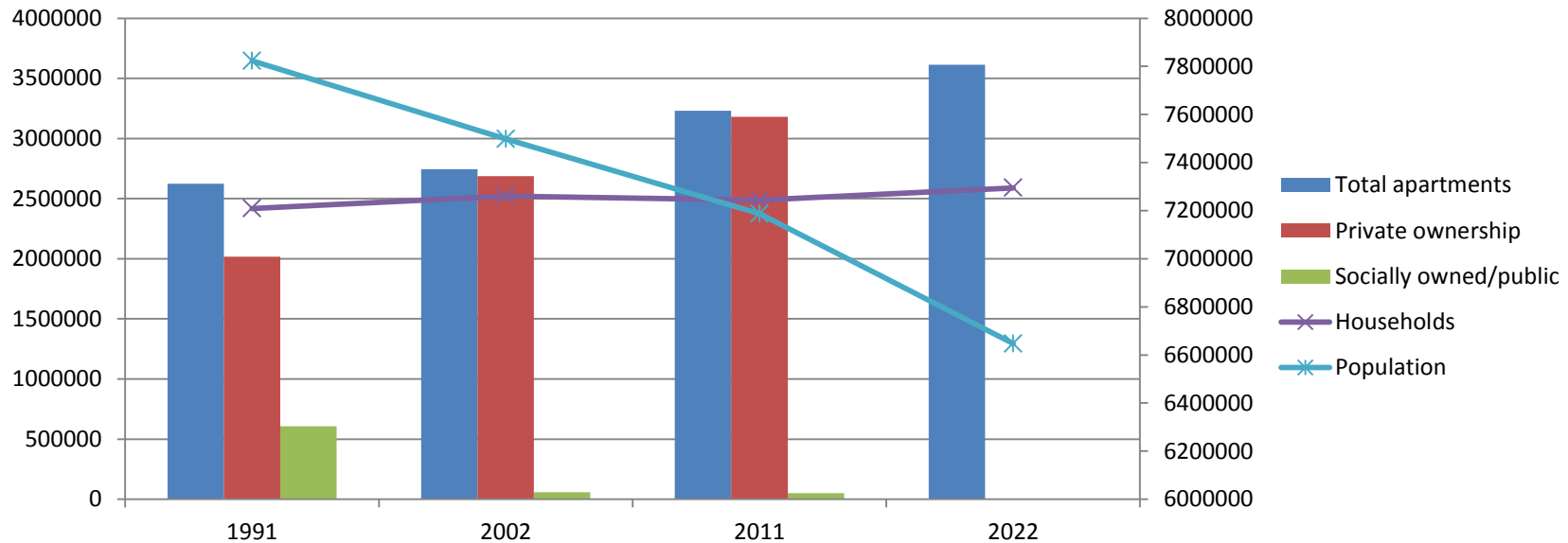
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- Background information about housing stock in Serbia
- Social housing terms and definition
- Provision and allocation
- Eligibility
- Housing support programs
- Civil society initiatives/activism
- City of Čačak – Housing Agency example



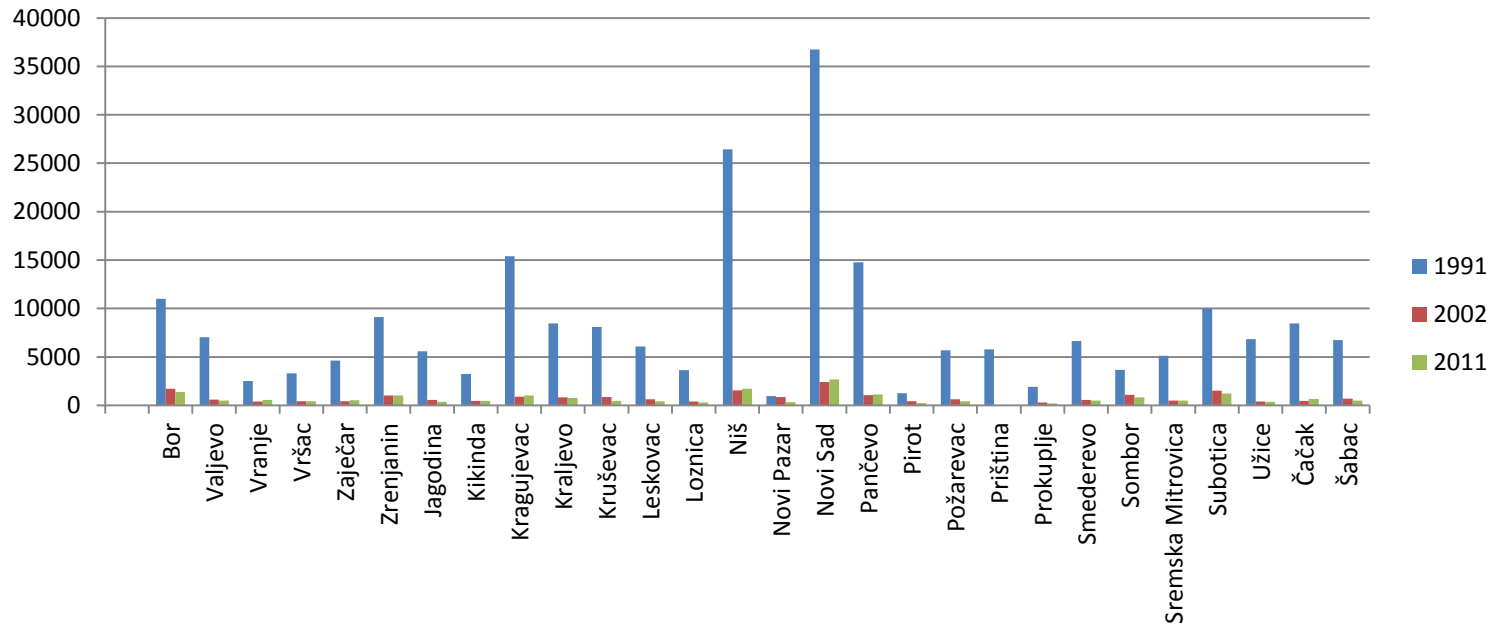
# Housing stock in Serbia

- Socialist period:
  - decentralized housing provision
  - housing as an element of the socialist welfare state
- Socially owned housing stock was affected by extensive privatization in the mid-1990s
- The dominance of owner-occupied housing (almost 99 % of total housing stock)



# Housing stock in Serbia

- Small social housing sector
- A mismatch between available social housing units and housing needs
- Unregulated private rental sector - no large landlords



Public housing stock in Serbian cities

# Social housing term and definition

The term “**social housing**” was introduced in the early 2000s through:

- General Urban Plan of Belgrade until 2021 (adopted in 2003)

The Law on **Social Housing** (adopted 2009)

- defined social housing as “any form of housing assistance to persons who are unable to fulfil the housing need for themselves and their household under market conditions with their own funds due to social, economic and other reasons”.

The Law on Housing and Maintenance of Apartment Buildings (adopted 2016)

- New term - “**housing support**” – same definition

# Who can get access - Eligibility criteria

## General eligibility criteria are defined by the law

To be eligible, a person should be:

- a **citizen** of the Republic of Serbia
- in a situation of housing need
  - **without an apartment** (does not own an apartment in Serbia)
  - **without appropriate apartment** (owns an apartment/house that does not meet criteria of an appropriate apartment as defined by the law)
- with **income** that cannot satisfy their housing needs or the housing needs of their family under market conditions.

# Who can get access - Specific criteria

## **Specific criteria:**

- homeless person (person in a homeless situation)
- Persons who are temporarily homeless, i.e. persons left without a home or whose housing conditions were significantly impaired due to structural instability of the building or due to natural disasters
- domestic violence victims
- Beneficiaries of financial social assistance
- 1st category veterans and beneficiaries of rights from the field of veteran & disability protection and protection of wartime disabled civilians
- persons with disabilities
- conditions, i.e. to improve their housing condition
- persons with occupations of interest to the municipality or state (key workers)

# Who can get access - Income criteria

The income threshold set by the Law

Corrective coefficient relates to:

- type of housing support
- average income at municipal level
- household structure/size

Values of the corrective coefficient for specific housing programs:

- 1,5 for obtaining ownership
- 1,2 for rental housing
- 0,5 for allocation of construction material and support for
- 0,7 za unapređenje energetske svojstava stana/kuće



# Appropriate apartment - spatial characteristics

The **appropriate apartment** is an apartment that fulfils the conditions in terms of:

- structure and size
- structural safety and security
- and basic housing sanitary conditions

Size of household (number of members)	Apartment structure	Net living area (m <sup>2</sup> )
1	Studio or one bedroom	22–30 m <sup>2</sup>
2	One bedroom, one-and-a-half bedroom or two bedroom	30–48 m <sup>2</sup>
3	One-and-a-half bedroom, two bedroom or two-and-a-half bedroom	40–56 m <sup>2</sup>
4	Two bedroom, two-and-a-half bedroom or three bedroom	50–64 m <sup>2</sup>
5	Two-and-a-half bedroom, three bedroom or three-and-a-half bedroom	56–77 m <sup>2</sup>
6 and more	Two-and-a-half bedroom, three bedroom or three-and-a-half bedroom	64–86 m <sup>2</sup>

# Provision of (social) housing support

- Provision and allocation are based on housing support programmes
- Procedure stipulated by national regulation
- Public authorities (local and national) are the main providers
- Types of housing support programmes (housing models) defined by regulation
- The Law stipulates housing support open to a broad cross-section of the population
- Targeted approach dominates regarding eligibility criteria and allocation of social housing



# Housing support types

The Law provides for five basic types of housing support:

1. Purchase and other forms of **obtaining ownership** over a flat or family house
  - Acquisition of property rights over a flat or family house through purchase under non-profit conditions
  - Acquisition of property rights over a flat or family house through allocation without compensation (rural area)
2. **Rental housing** which includes two types of housing support:
  - Renting publicly owned apartment under non-profit conditions (non-profit cost-based rent) entails leasing publicly owned real estate that can not be bought or sold
  - Subsidizing the rent for housing units in any form of property (housing allowance), providing housing support to beneficiaries through down payment and/or financial assistance in paying a part of the rent or non-profit rent



# Housing support types

## 3. Improvement of housing conditions:

- allocation of construction material and/or professional support for refurbishment, adaptation, reconstruction or extension of the flat or family house
- Improvement of the energy efficiency of the flat or home

## 4. Assistance to Legalize a Flat or Family

- assistance for the development of technical and land surveying documentation for the legalization of a flat and/or family house
- Improvement of informal settlements

## 5. Emergency housing

- provision of temporary accommodation for those in emergencies (homeless, temporarily homeless, persons living in structurally unsafe buildings, as well as domestic violence).

# Housing support programs implementation

## Rental or obtaining of ownership housing programs

**Provider:** public authority (national or local)

**Funding:** depending on the programme – usually combining funds from the national budget, local budget, and donations or loans from international development banks

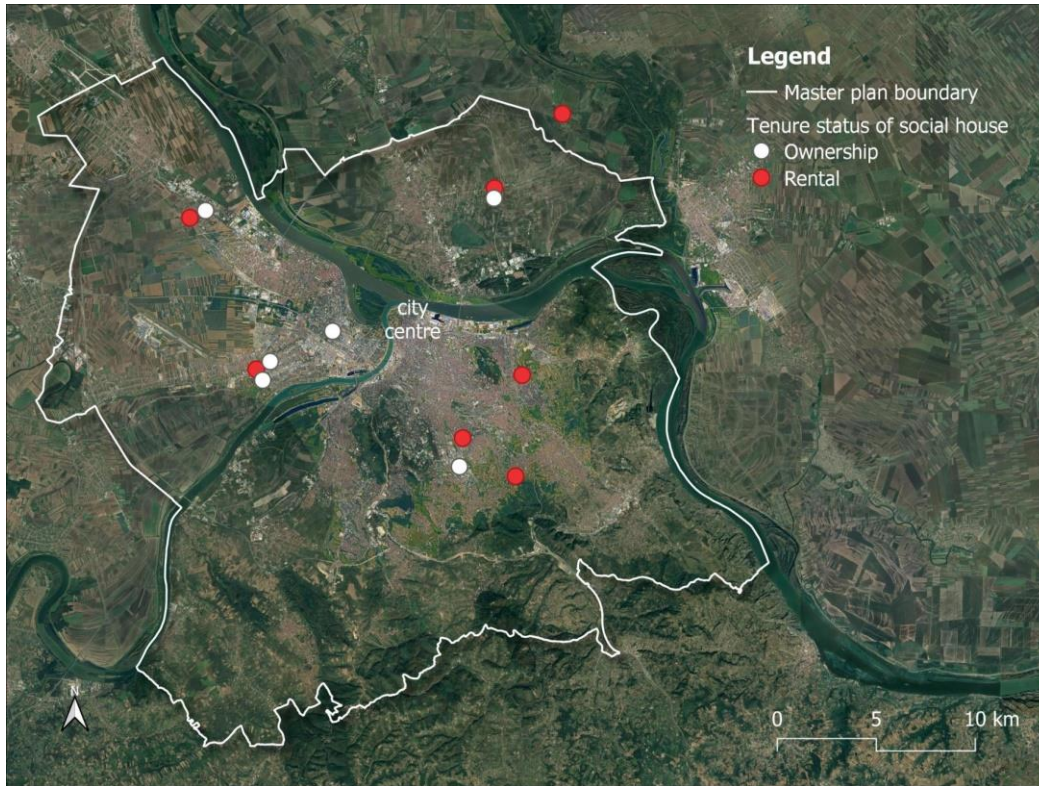
**Plot:** the municipality supplies land from existing land stock (in-kind contribution) as well as technical and social infrastructure

**Design and project:** open competition of ideas for building design or public tender

**Eligibility criteria:** determined by regulation; housing programme/donor can decide on their own criteria

**Allocation:** public call upon specific housing support programme, criteria varied for each program (vulnerability, housing status, health conditions, key workers/ and particular professions such as public administration, police, the army, and academia)

# Locations for social housing construction



- Within urban tissue
- Manly in peripheral zones
- Equipped with technical and social infrastructure
- Social housing combined with market housing and other functions
- Rental and owner-occupied housing located in the same area (but not within the same building).
- Threat: concentration of low-income and vulnerable tenants

The city of Belgrade, the position of larger (social) housing complexes

# Obtaining ownership - purchase

**Provider:** Foundation for Solving the Housing Needs of Young Scientific Researches of the University of Belgrade

**Date:** 1996/2003 – 2022 implemented in several stages

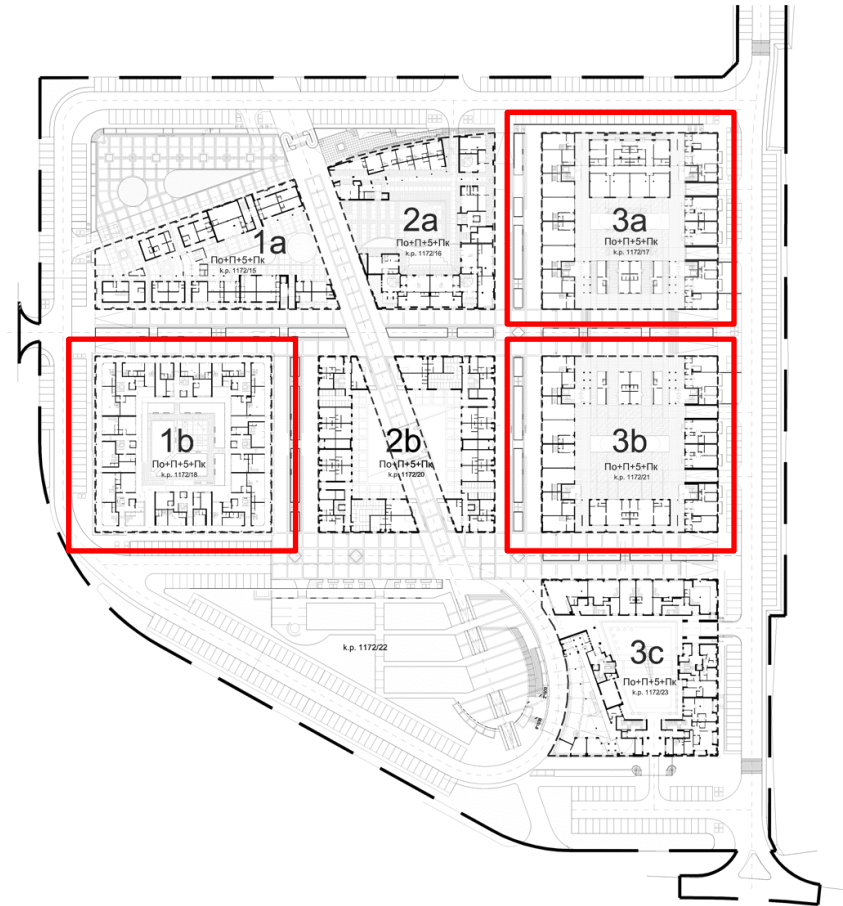
**Planned:** 7 buildings with 811 apartments

**Constructed:** 3 buildings, 387 apartments, 55 shops, kindergarten

**Funding:** A loan from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

**Design and project:** competition of ideas among professors from the Faculty of Architecture; high construction and spatial standards

**Plot:** City of Belgrade granted land to the Foundation



University Settlement "Block 32", New Belgrade

# Obtaining ownership - purchase

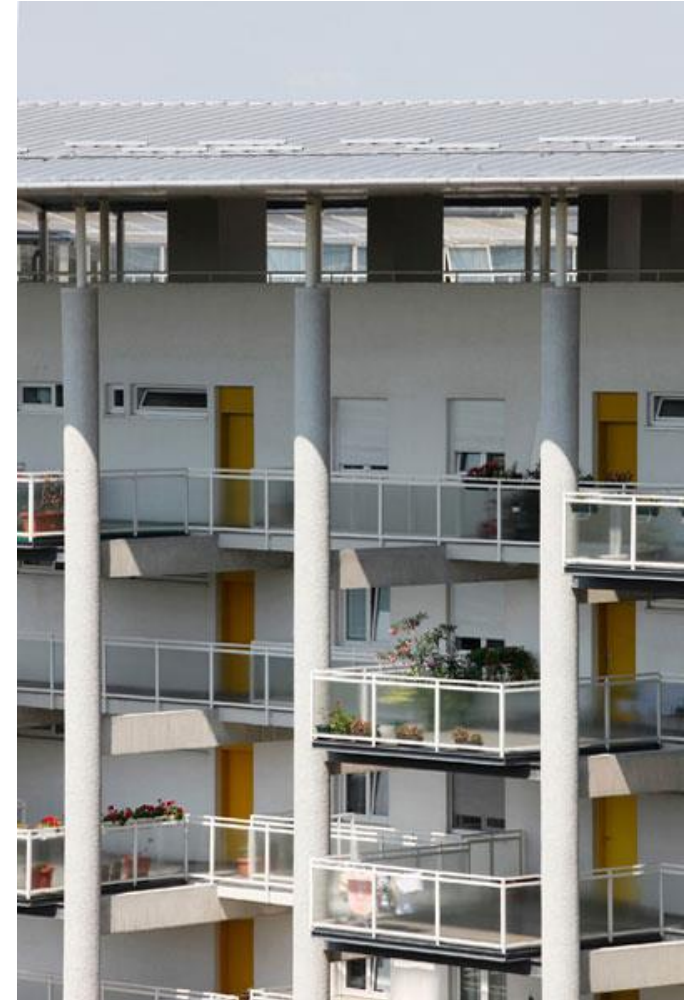
## Eligibility criteria:

- early career teachers of Belgrade University and researchers from public research Institutes,
- early career artists employed in cultural institutions of national interest
- Serbian citizenship and permanent residence in Belgrade
- current housing situation

**Allocation:** public call with pre-defined set of criteria; waiting list was established

## Purchase conditions:

- Rent for the first five years. The rental price was 200 dinars/m<sup>2</sup> (about 2 Euro/m<sup>2</sup>).
- After five years, tenants had the opportunity to purchase the apartment.
- The purchase price was 765 Euro/m<sup>2</sup>, which the Government defined.
- A person/household has a loan for up to 20 years.
- A fixed value of monthly installments is linked with the Euro currency rate.
- The apartment cannot be sold out 10 years after signing the contract.



University Settlement "Block 32", New Belgrade



# Rental social housing

**Provider:** Local authorities City of Čačak City Housing Agency Čačak

**Date:** 2006-2008

**Constructed:** 10 buildings, 76 apartments, communal space

**Funding:** Donation of the Italian Government through the UN-Habitat SIRP Program (Settlement and Integration of Refugees Program)

**Design and project:** public competition of ideas

**Plot:** provided by the City of Čačak

**Eligibility criteria:**

- Refugees from former republics of Yugoslavia
- housing situation (without home/property in the territory of Serbia)
- Income threshold (minimum and maximum)
- residence in Čačak

**Allocation:** public call with a pre-defined set of criteria;

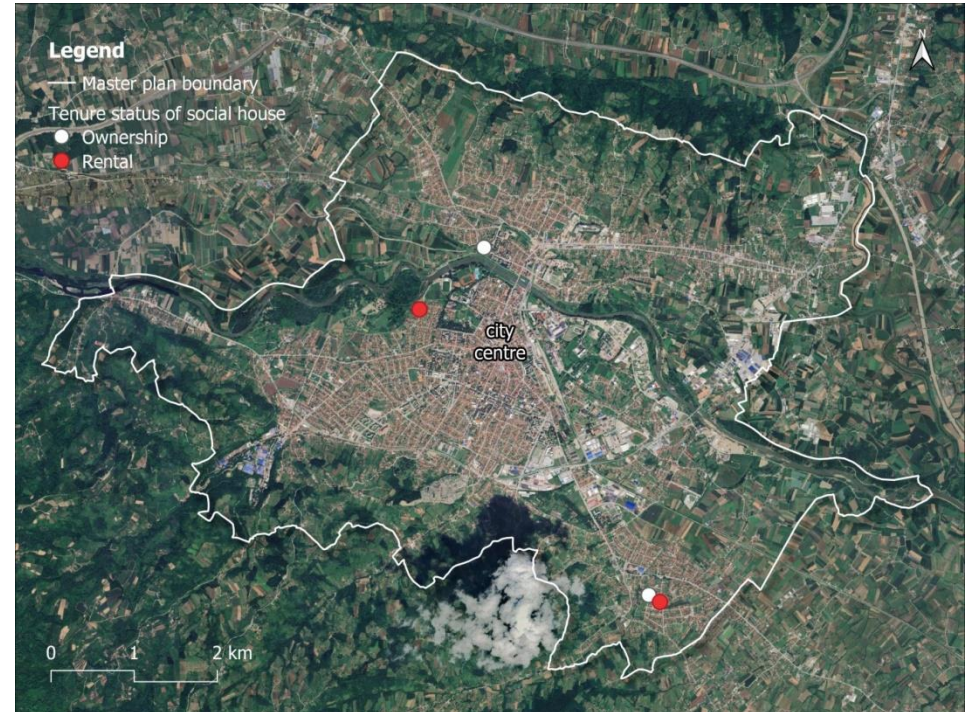
- 80% refugees
- 20% local vulnerable population



# Rental social housing

## Renting conditions:

- calculation of rent based on construction costs/non-profit rent
- about 1.3 euro /m<sup>2</sup>
- tenants pay rent and utility costs
- the apartment cannot be sold out
- Renewal of the contract every 3 years
- Tenants stay in an apartment as long as they are in housing needs



# Rental social housing

**Provider:** Local authority City of Čačak - City Housing Agency

**Date:** 2022-2023

**Constructed:** 1 building, 14 apartments, 2 rooms as communal space

**Funding:** EU Support to Social Housing and Active Inclusion Program

- 80% - European Union - Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)
- 20% - City of Čačak

**Plot:** property of the City of Čačak

## Eligibility criteria:

- Specific vulnerable groups (women victims of domestic violence, Roma, people with disabilities, youths leaving the social protection system)
- housing situation (without home/property in the territory of Serbia)
- Income threshold
- Serbian citizenship and residence in Čačak

**Allocation:** public call with a pre-defined set of criteria



# City of Čačak - City Housing Agency

- Established in 2005 by the City of Čačak
- A new local mechanism with the competence in developing and monitoring local housing policy implementation
- Implements housing support programs
- Provides social housing to various vulnerable groups



# Civil society initiatives

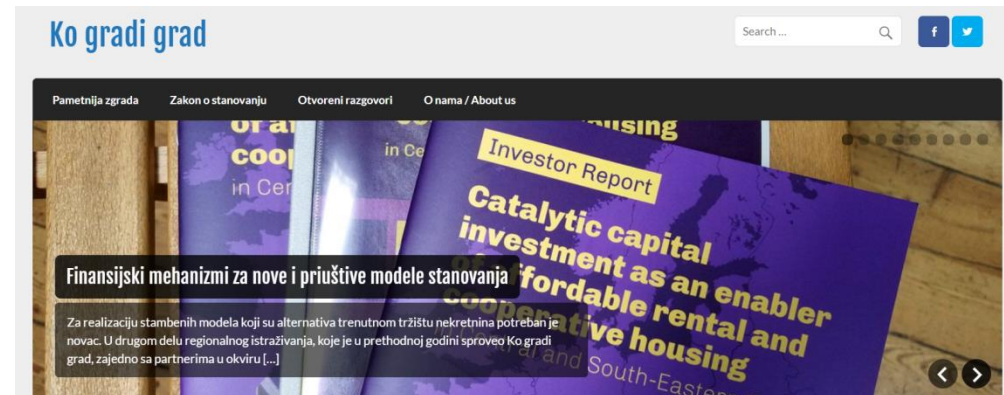
Network of NGOs involved in social housing advocacy

**Ne davimo Beograd** /Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own

- Housing policy focused
- “Controlled rents against the housing crisis”

**Krov nad glavom** / Roof over our heads

- Establishing cooperatives and cooperative housing (MOBA)



# Concluding remarks

- The dominance of owner-occupied housing
- The pressing need for more affordable housing remains
- Small social (public) housing sector with a decreasing tendency
- A long-term national housing policy has not been established yet
- Social housing provision is based on housing programs/projects
- Social housing /housing support programs:
  - By regulation - Universalist model - open to a broad cross-section of the population
  - In practice - Targeted model - allocation concentrated primarily on low-income, vulnerable populations and key workers
- Frail care of the authorities (national and local) in providing housing for people with low and middle-incomes
- Lack of long-term budget lines for social housing; funding is based on donations and loans from international development banks