

# **High Representative extends deadline for use of socially-owned apartments for alternative accommodation**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today extended the deadline for the use of socially-owned apartments as alternative accommodation to make sure that the apartments will continue to be used as alternative accommodation. The High Representative notes that the Federation needs to put forward a legislative amendment, which adequately ensures that the apartments can be used as alternative accommodation until such time as all repossession claims have been implemented.

Under existing Federation property legislation, unclaimed socially-owned apartments were to be used as alternative accommodation until 4 July 2001. This provision was placed in the law in order to provide housing officials with a supply of alternative accommodation. Such apartments now constitute the largest source of potential alternative accommodation. However, not all such apartments have until now been utilized for this purpose. Despite the fact that municipalities have a legal obligation to provide alternative accommodation, they have failed to do so sufficiently. Some municipalities have failed to provide lists of unclaimed apartments, and other apartments, and others have been slow to allocate such apartments to those entitled to them.

Currently, the rate of implementation of property laws stands at just 36% in the Federation, which means that some 80,000 claims have yet to be implemented. The main impediment to faster processing in most of the larger urban areas, particularly Sarajevo, Zenica and Tuzla, is the lack of

alternative accommodation. Recently, Federation Minister for Urban Planning and Environment Ramiz Mehmedagic announced that some 22,000 apartments had gone unclaimed in the Federation – however, to date few of these apartments have been made available as alternative accommodation. The High Representative expects that these apartments be provided for individuals with the legal right to alternative accommodation.

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