

“POSTOVANJE” Property Rights Awareness Campaign

The Office of the High Representative, the OSCE Mission to BiH and UNHCR together with UNMIBH and CRPC have launched the “RESPECT” campaign, to promote the implementation of property legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The International Community wants to stress that RESPECT is essential in the whole property implementation process. Respect for the right to property and respect for the right to return are the underlying rationales for the property legislation. Local authorities, those who seek to repossess their property and those who have to vacate other people’s property must respect the law. The respect for human rights and the rule of law are fundamental principles in any democracy.

The campaign was conceived and developed by OHR and the OSCE with assistance from UNHCR using experience of real situations in the field. The campaign was designed and produced by REFRESH Production, who were chosen following a rigorous tender procedure undertaken by OHR earlier this year.

The first phase of the “RESPECT” campaign ran from late March to late April and consisted of three TV spots and posters focusing on the importance of respect and the need for it to be mutual: “What is respect?”; “I respect you, do you respect me?”; “I respect your rights – do you respect mine?” were the key messages.

The second phase of the campaign commenced at the end of April and highlighted specific examples which show the lack of respect of property rights and the laws they relate to. For example, the first of the four television spots addresses double occupancy caused by individuals refusing to return to

homes reconstructed for them, despite having initially expressed a desire to return.

Over the next 4 weeks a further three TV spots will be aired, posing the question, "Do you respect the law? These spots will provide information on; deadlines under the law for current occupants to leave claimed apartments voluntarily or face eviction, double occupancy caused by split families, and the responsibility of the local authorities for the implementation of property laws. These spots will be supported by billboards, posters, newspaper advertisements, sugar packets and postcards throughout BiH.

Two information leaflets have been produced, one addressing current occupants, entitled "Zivite u tudjoj imovini?", and the second for claimants, entitled "Zelim uci u posjed svoje imovine". Both outline peoples options and rights under the law.

Radio spots, containing specific practical information and advice about the options and rights of current occupants, the role of the local authorities, and the repossession process have been airing on stations throughout the country for the duration of the campaign.

Every citizen is entitled to information about the laws that govern the state and entity in which they live. This campaign gives citizens information concerning their rights under the law, and enables them to make an informed decision concerning their future.

Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP)

On October 27, 1999 the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, with the full support of OSCE, UNHCR and UNMIBH launched the Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP) by passing amendments and instructions to harmonize and clarify RS and FBiH legislation on property repossession, in order to create a consistent legal framework and equal rights and

remedies for all refugees and displaced persons across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Property Legislation Implementation Plan (PLIP) – closely coordinated and executed by representatives of OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, UNMIBH and CRPC – is at its heart a political operation to ensure that all citizens of BiH can exercise their individual rights to property, thereby unlocking the return process throughout BiH.