

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

OSCE Mission to BiH and OHR remind on deadline to request revision of land allocations under the Law on Construction Land

The deadline to request revision under the Law on Construction Land expires on 16 May 2005 . All those who were construction land users before 1992 and whose right has subsequently been cancelled are encouraged to apply for the revision of such decision under this Law before the expiration of the deadline. Requests for revision should be submitted in the municipalities where land is located; to Municipal Departments for Property and Legal Affairs in the FBiH and municipal offices of the Geodetical Institute in the RS.

The Law on Construction Land entered into force in both entities of BiH on 15 May 2003 . This Law provides a mechanism for pre-war users of construction land to request the revision and challenge the cancellation of their right performed without their consent. The OSCE Mission to BiH recent survey established that a very small number of requests for revision have been filed throughout BiH; approximately 150 in total. Relevant authorities did not take any action for 40 percent of these requests. About 20 requests were resolved positively by offering land repossession, other land plot allocations and/or compensation in cash.

PBS System Law

Members of the BiH House of Representatives will discuss the Public Broadcasting System Law at their session tomorrow.

Reforming the public broadcasting system is a precondition for BiH to move ahead on a Stabilization and Association Agreement. Failure to adopt the necessary PBS legislation could therefore jeopardize BiH's European prospects at a crucial time, as the EU prepares to make an assessment on BiH's progress in May, and as other countries in the region embark on the EU accession process.

We urge the members of the House of Reps to support the due adoption of law that was approved earlier by the Council of Ministers, and reject the conclusions reached in the Committee on communication and transport.

Unification of the Centers for Social Welfare

OHR commends the Mostar city authorities for achieving full implementation of the unification of the Centers for Social Welfare. As of today, all staff are working in the pre-war premises, for the good of all Mostarians especially those who are most in need: those who are socially vulnerable. This successful example shows clearly that Decisions of the City Council on unifying City Institutions can be implemented quickly and efficiently. OHR calls on the City Authorities to stay on this path in order to secure the unification of all divided City Institutions. By doing this they will be able to deliver better services to citizens, sooner rather than later."