

High Representative Extends Decision on Collective and Transit Centres

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Wednesday issued a Decision extending by six months the requirement that domestic authorities take steps to ensure that all collective centres and transit centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina are used as both alternative and emergency accommodation.

Substantial progress has been made on implementing a plan adopted by the State Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons on 11 September 2002, whereby a list of around 600 families still living in transit or collective accommodation, and who have unsolved property claims, was created. Over 60 percent of these cases have now been solved. The High Representative's Decision will cease to apply when all the remaining cases from the list, affecting around 250 families, are solved.

The High Representative has issued this Decision in order to ensure that no one is left without adequate protection while this plan is being implemented.

This type of accommodation is needed in order to provide for those who would otherwise risk becoming homeless upon leaving claimed property. As many facilities as possible should be devoted to this purpose, in accordance with the property laws. As one of the largest potential resources for such accommodation, collective centres must remain open and be converted into alternative and emergency accommodation, to ensure that as the property laws are implemented in chronological order and within the legal deadlines, the risk of anyone being left unprovided for is minimised.