

International Community Welcomes Amendments And Clarifications Of The Property Legislation In Both Entities

The international community welcomes the amendments and instructions to the property legislation in both the Republika Srpska and the Federation and the Law on the Implementation of the Decision of the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees. In particular, the international community wishes to convey its full support of the decision of the High Representative to impose these amendments and legislation, although it regrets the need for imposition.

It has been 19 months since the passage of the property legislation in the Federation and 10 months since the passage of the property legislation in the RS. Implementation of this legislation in both entities has been unsatisfactory. The failure of many authorities at all levels to ensure its implementation must end. All relevant authorities, and in particular housing authorities and mayors must ensure the property legislation, as amended, is fully implemented – and in the spirit it was intended.

Among other things, the amendments harmonize the property legislation in both entities. It can no longer be said that return to pre-war residence is no longer possible. By providing definitions of “multiple occupant” and who is entitled to alternative accommodation, there can no longer be a debate that those who benefited during the war by receiving the right to occupy abandoned apartments should continue to do so.

Over the course of the next several weeks the International Community will ensure the authorities are aware of their obligations under the new amendments and persons wishing to return to their homes are aware of their rights.

The International Community urges all those wishing to return to pursue their rights and to place the burden squarely on the authorities to ensure those rights are respected.