

Property implementation figures for June 2001

The Agencies involved in the Property Law Implementation Plan (OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, UNMIBH and CRPC) announced that, as of the end of June, the implementation of property laws rose to 29% across BiH: an increase of almost 2 % since the end of May. 38% of cases have been solved in the Federation (a 1.7% increase in implementation); 19% of cases in the Republika Srpska (a 1.6% increase in implementation); and 22% of cases in the Brcko District have been solved (an increase of only 1.3% in implementation). These increases in implementation rates remain far below the levels necessary to ensure completion of the process within a reasonable time period.

In the Federation, implementation rates in many areas continue to improve, although the overall rate is diminished by continuing poor implementation in Mostar North, Mostar South-West, Mostar South, Glamoc and Kupres in particular. In the RS, overall implementation rates remain highly unsatisfactory, while the lack of progress in Banja Luka, Prijedor, and throughout the Eastern RS (including Bratunac, Cajnice, Foca/Srbinje, Rogatica, Srebrenica, Visegrad and Zvornik) is particularly poor. Implementation rates in Brcko District also remain unacceptably low. The slow rates of increase are of particular concern given that summer is normally the height of the return season. Officials responsible for housing issues are reminded that housing offices should remain fully operational during the summer months.

In addition, local authorities are encouraged to take all steps to ensure stricter application of the property laws. Individuals who are in a position to meet their own housing needs including those who have received a land plot, housing credit or other form of housing assistance, should not continue to use claimed or abandoned property. Similarly, individuals who fail to claim their own pre-war property cannot expect that they will be able to continue to resolve their own housing needs by occupying the property of others. Officials should also develop plans for the closing of smaller housing offices, as the repossession process should not last indefinitely, and shifting of the resources to offices with large numbers of claims. These actions should be coordinated with the IC based on work plans for each municipality.