

## **Federation Adoption of Amended Property and Housing Laws**

The Office of the High Representative considers the recent adoption of the Law on Cessation of the Application of the Law on Abandoned Apartments by the Federation Parliament a crucial step towards implementation of Annex 7 of the Peace Agreement. This law, along with the other two laws in the property legislation package, provides the essential legal framework for return of refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes. The OHR applauds the fact that this frequently-delayed step has now been taken, and commends the efforts of those who have worked diligently to ensure passage of this important legislation.

As noted, all three laws have now passed both Houses of the Federation Parliament in versions which are acceptable to the OHR, and should soon be signed and published in the Official Gazette. At that time, the challenging task of implementing the laws will begin. OHR, along with the involved international and Federation organisations, will be working closely with Federation authorities to ensure that the laws are implemented fully and fairly, in a manner wholly consistent with both the letter and spirit of the laws.

At the same time, OHR would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to the adoption of property and housing legislation in the Republika Srpska which is fully consistent with both the Peace Agreement and with the laws adopted by the Federation. Intensive discussions on this subject are already underway, and draft laws should be proposed to the Republika Srpska government in the immediate future.