

Press Communique: Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees.

Under the Dayton Agreement, the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees is mandated to restore a fair and just system of Property Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to continue its work, an appeal is being launched in Sarajevo and Geneva on Monday 16 September, 1996.

The Commission is an international and independent body, comprised of nine members; three members from Western Europe, and six members from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since the Commission started its work in March, it has met regularly to analyse complex property laws and set principles for its future decisions. On 4 September 1996, a Headquarters Agreement was signed which gives the Commission freedom from influence by any authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina when performing its duties in the country.

The Commission has also begun its operational task, which will be enormous. Hundreds of thousands of claims are expected to be received from people within the country as well as abroad. In order to be able to handle those claims, a direct data collections system has been put in place. Registration forms in which people can express their wishes relating to their property will be distributed at information centres. This will be followed by an appointment with a data collection officer who will, in the presence of the claimant, enter information about the property into a computer. Coordinated from various field-offices, mobile data collection teams will travel throughout the country to meet people and give them the possibility to submit their claim. Through this system of direct data collection, accuracy will be ensured and the whole country will eventually be served. Similar systems will operate in countries abroad. Property is at the heart of international efforts to re-establish human rights and to ensure that the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina proceeds on a sound basis.