

# Decision on Socially Owned Land Extended

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Thursday 30th, 1999 extended the temporary suspension of the powers of municipal authorities, in both entities, to re-allocate certain types of socially owned land. The suspension is now in effect until June 30th, 2000.

The decision to suspend this right of the municipal authorities was initially brought on May 26th, 1999 for a six-month period. It prevented municipal authorities from disposing of socially owned property if, on April 6th, 1992, it was being used for residential, religious or cultural purposes.

At the time, the High Representative stressed that the widespread misuse, re-allocation and sale of socially owned land was a clear violation of Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement and a threat to the process of return. The High Representative also urged both Entity Governments to bring their legal framework regulating the use of land into accord with Annex 7 and international human rights standards and to prevent complications in the privatisation and restitution process.

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, feels that legal framework governing socially owned land has not improved sufficiently and has therefore extended the suspension for a further six months. Should the legal situation remain unsatisfactorily the suspension of powers may be extended again.

This decision does not effect the laws governing socially owned apartments, which are regulated by separate legislation.

The High Representative has taken this decision according to the powers vested in him by Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace

Agreement, and by Article XI of the Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council meeting, held in Bonn in December 1997.