

High Representative Extends Ban on the Allocation of State-Owned Land

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, yesterday issued a Decision extending the ban on the allocation of state-owned land in BiH, first introduced by a Decision of the High Representative on 27 April 2000. The ban is extended until 15 May 2003, i.e. until the enactment of legislation, in particular the consolidated and harmonized Law on Construction Land in both Entities regulating the issue of state-owned property, including former socially-owned property.

In his letter to the BiH State Presidency, the Entity Prime Ministers, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the State Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, the High Representative urged the BiH authorities to accelerate efforts to adopt laws that ensure that all future transfers of land under the domestic legal process will be non-discriminatory, and will provide a framework for resolving disputed allocations made after 6 April 1991. Further, he noted the progress made in drafting reforming legislation within the Working Group formed by the Council of Ministers, and called upon the relevant ministries, experts and parliaments to complete this process before the deadline of 15 May 2003 after which he will consider exercising his authority to bring appropriate legislation into force.

Finally, the High Representative reiterated his commitment to restore domestic authority to initiate transfers of state owned property, but only when legislative reforms are in place.