No Suspension of Evictions in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Yesterday, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has issued a Decision annulling the Conclusion adopted by the RS National Assembly on 10 November, which suspended evictions of certain categories of persons from 1 November 1999 to 1 April 2000.

If allowed to take effect, this Conclusion would only serve to deny refugees and displaced persons their right to return to their homes. Hundreds of thousands still do not have access to their apartments and houses, and it is imperative that the process of property repossession is not delayed or temporarily suspended. As a matter of fact, it must significantly accelerate.

There is a legal framework in place in both Entities that requires the authorities to provide alternative housing to those who must vacate other people's homes and whose housing needs are not met otherwise. This legislation ensures that nobody is evicted onto the streets. It is the responsibility of the authorities to act in accordance with the law and provide the ones in need of housing with a solution.

Too much time has passed already. It is now time to enforce citizens' rights to their homes, their property and to return. The High Representative will not allow for any compromise in that regard.

The High Representative has issued this Decision exercising the powers vested in him under Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and by Article XI of the Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council Conference held in Bonn in December 1997.