Letter to Mr. Mehmedagic and Mr. Garib

Mr. Ramiz Mehmedagic,

Minister for Urban Planning and Environment,

Mr. Sulejman Garib,

Minister for Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees

Federation BiH

We have noted that some progress is being achieved in the implementation of the property legislation in certain municipalities. We are concerned however by housing bodies which claim they cannot implement the property legislation because they claim that they lack alternative accommodation, be it appropriate or emergency accommodation.

The strict implementation of the property legislation is, as we all know, of utmost importance. In that context and in line also with the legislation on refugees and displaced persons, the respective authorities are under obligation to provide alternative accommodation to persons who must vacate the currently occupied flat or house and cannot yet return to their homes of origin. The property legislation stipulates the entitlement for alternative accommodation for legal users under certain conditions, whereas the legislation on refugees and displaced persons is relevant for illegal users who are at the same time displaced persons/refugees and are in need of accommodation. Therefore, the appropriate steps must be taken by the respective Entity and Cantonal authorities, to identify suitable buildings to be used for appropriate/emergency accommodation for evictees.

In order to achieve real progress and swift implementation of the property legislation, we are very much looking forward to receiving your plan of action and foreseen initiatives in the identification of alternative accommodation.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this very important matter, we remain

Yours faithfully,

Ambassador Wolfgang Petrisch

High Representative

Ambassador Robert L. Barry

OSCE Head of Mission

Mr. Werner Blatter

UNHCR Chief of Mission