

One fourth of property claims have been resolved

Sarajevo, 29 May 2001 – 25% of property claims have resulted in repossessions and 50% have been decided upon, according to the April statistics released today by the Agencies involved in the Property Law Implementation Plan (UNHCR, OSCE, OHR, UNMIBH and CRPC).

These results represent an important benchmark in the implementation of property legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since the adoption of the property laws, 43,266 families have been able to pick up the keys of their pre-war homes in the Federation, 19,332 in the Republika Srpska and 1,433 in the Brcko District.

During the first four months of 2001, however, the rate of implementation continues to increase at a less than acceptable pace. Disappointingly, the increase in the implementation rate in the Republika Srpska dropped from 2% in March to only 1% in April, giving an average monthly increase in 2001 of less than 1%. This delay is causing particular suffering and frustration in Banja Luka, where several hundreds of families who never left this municipality (the so called “floaters”) have not yet been able to repossess their pre-war homes. The implementation rate in the Federation during this period has risen faster than that in the Republika Srpska, but the rate of increase remains slow, not yet having reached 2%.

The implementation rate remains particularly low in some municipalities in the Eastern Republika Srpska and areas of Cantons 7 and 10 in the Federation. In order to achieve meaningful results before the end of 2001, local authorities in both entities will have to significantly accelerate the rate of implementation of property legislation, especially in

areas where there has been little improvement to date. Authorities should also begin looking to complete the repossession process in municipalities with small numbers of claims over the next several months so that resources can be shifted to offices with larger numbers of pending claims.