Property Law implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina nears completion

The PLIP agencies (OHR, UNHCR and OSCE) announced today in Sarajevo that the implementation of the property laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is nearing its completion.

The Office of the High Representative, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OSCE Mission to BiH, said that the property law implementation ratio in the country at the end of December had reached 92,5 per cent. The three agencies said that local housing authorities had finalized 201,902 of a total of 218,310 property claims registered and issued almost 99 per cent of first instance decisions. A total of 41 municipalities have been verified as having substantially completed the implementation, and 88 municipalities which have completed all pending cases have established concrete timetables to demonstrate their substantial completion of all legal obligations under the property laws, in accordance with the Municipal Guidelines for Substantial Completion of Property Law Implementation.

The statement said that, as Property Law Implementation approached substantial completion throughout the country, the PLIP agencies note with disappointment that a number of municipalities had failed to meet the deadline for completing the property claims, which expired on 31 December 2003. The agencies pointed out in particular their concern about the municipalities of Donji Vakuf, Tuzla and Jajce, which failed to complete their task by the end of December 2003, despite reassurances given to the international community that deadlines would be respected. The organizations also said that they were concerned about the closure of several municipal offices of the Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees responsible for property law completion in the Republika Srpska. The Republika Srpska Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees has declared its commitment to the effective completion of this process. However, the agencies said in their statement, with the closure of these offices, the final phase of this process was being seriously disrupted.