

**Judicial Independence in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan,
Presentation of the *Kyiv Recommendations*
Bishkek, 20 April 2011 (Hotel Ak Keme, 9h30 am)**

Welcoming address

by the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek H.E. Ambassador A. Tesoriere

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen

Let me warmly welcome you at this roundtable focusing on the independence of the judiciary in the Kyrgyz Republic. I am pleased to observe that the spectrum of participants includes MPs, government officials, judges and lawyers, international organizations and civil society representatives. I am also grateful for the excellent cooperation between the Supreme Court, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the co-organization of this important and timely discussion on a topic –the independence of the judiciary- at the very heart of any democratic society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A truly independent judiciary is crucial in laying the foundations of the rule of law and democratic institutions and is instrumental for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The new Kyrgyz Constitution adopted by referendum last year provides Kyrgyzstan with a solid framework on issues related to judicial independence. This framework is currently being substantiated in line with constitutional and international standards, including through five draft laws touching upon the organization of the Supreme Court and local courts, the Constitutional Chamber within the Supreme Court, the Council on the Selection of Judges and laws on judicial self regulation and the status of judges in the country.

The planned and ongoing legislative developments make our roundtable today as relevant as ever. As you know, this event comes as an almost immediate follow-up to ODIHR's recent assessment trip to Kyrgyzstan. I am confident this event will represent for all of you a valuable platform to discuss challenges and opportunities, as well as problems with respect to the practical implementation the new constitutional provisions regarding the judiciary and its independence. Today's roundtable also represents a unique opportunity for ODIHR to introduce the "Kyiv Recommendations" into the Kyrgyz judicial reform debate. We hope the Recommendations will provide participants with inspiration for further reforms.

I should like to underline the importance of public trust for the success of any reform effort in this delicate area. A judiciary that is not felt as independent across the society does not enjoy the trust of citizens: reform efforts that seek to improve the administration of justice need to develop this trust, or are ultimately destined to fail. I believe that best practices from other countries in the region having faced similar challenges in the past may prove useful for Kyrgyzstan today.

Wrapping up my short welcoming remarks, I should like one more time to assure the participants that as part of its mandate in assisting the Kyrgyz authorities in the implementation of OSCE commitments, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek will keep up its efforts aimed at facilitating discussions and a frank dialogue on issues related to the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law. I do hope that this roundtable will be just the first step in a longer path of fruitful cooperation among all the actors represented around the table today.

Thanking you for your attention, I wish you a constructive discussion today.