

**Round table on presentation of a final report on monitoring of freedom of assembly
Bishkek, 19 December 2011**

**Opening remarks by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, the Head of the OSCE Centre
in Bishkek**

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to welcome you at this round table to discuss ways to improve the implementation of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in Kyrgyzstan. The discussion today will benefit from the fact-finding report before you, which was supported by the OSCE Centre over the past months.

I am thankful to Freedom House Kyrgyzstan and the NGO “Independent Human Rights Group” for co-organizing this event. I am especially grateful to OSCE/ODIHR and to its Panel of Experts on Freedom of Assembly -represented today by Mr. Serghei Ostaf- for sharing with us today international expertise and best practices in this field.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to continue here in English, which you can follow in Russian on channel (x).

Freedom of peaceful assembly is one very visible manifestation of expression of opinion. As a cornerstone of democratic society, it allows a diverse range of groups to make their views known. The full realization of this freedom requires governments to listen to a wide variety of voices and views. Securing this right may contribute to the promotion of understanding between groups in society and government and assist in addressing issues of public concern, thereby leading to more stable and secure societies.

The right to freedom of peaceful assembly, as well as its permitted limitations, is clearly defined in several international human rights documents, including OSCE Commitments. The new Kyrgyz Constitution provides Kyrgyzstan with solid directions on freedom of assembly. In particular, I should like to highlight that Article 34 provides for a notification as opposed to an authorization system and was praised by the Venice Commission as fully adherent to international human rights standards.

Monitoring and analyzing freedom of assembly in the country provide us we the necessary elements to better understand this freedom and its regulation. The report shows that the majority of the assemblies observed were held without notification and that no assembly was restricted during the observation period. The report’s finding also highlight that while a considerable decrease of police interference with the right to peaceful assemblies was noted, there may be room for building the capacity of law enforcement agencies with regards to the role they play in the implementation of this fundamental freedom. Based on today’s discussion, the OSCE Centre stands ready to develop follow-up activities, including capacity-building of relevant state authorities on international standards governing freedom of assembly, upon request.

I should like to point out that the project was conducted in a very timely fashion, considering that the draft on peaceful assemblies is currently under consideration by the Jogorku Kenesh. I hope that the recommendations included in the report will serve as a solid reference source for legislators as well as other stakeholders with a view to improving both policy and practice in this area. I hope that as a result of today’s discussion all stakeholders will reach a common understanding on freedom of assembly, which would facilitate both the adoption and the implementation of the law in line with international standards. I wish you a fruitful and constructive discussion.