

Statement

**By Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Kazakhstan M.Jarbussynova at the First Session
of the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Seminar on
«Political Parties and OSCE Commitments»
(18 May 2011, Warsaw)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Political pluralism and a multi-party system in the modern world are considered not only as the basic principles of democratic organization of society, but also as a source and compulsory condition of democracy. In this context, the role of political parties and other political organizations is paramount, since they are the mechanisms linking state and civil society institutions.

Since the first years of independence, Kazakhstan has been establishing and developing its party system in accordance with the international and OSCE commitments.

The Constitution and laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan ensure the rights to political parties except for those whose activity is aimed at “forcible change of the constitutional order, violation of integrity of the republic, undermining the state security, and inciting social, racial, ethnic, religious, class and tribal enmity”. Besides, the law does not allow the government’s interference in affairs of political parties and public associations.

With the vigorous pace of political development, Kazakhstan has witnessed the rapid development of political parties of different ideology, some of them duplicated one another during the first ten years of independence. The need to streamline the party-building emerged. The new Law “On Political Parties”, which gave impetus to further logical development and strengthening of the party system, was adopted in 2002. Concordantly 10 major political parties have been formed in the republic, which reflect a wide range of political views of the citizens in Kazakhstan, i.e. “Nur Otan” People's Democratic Party, “Auly” Kazakhstan Social

Democratic Party, “Ak Zhol” Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan Patriots’ Party, “Adilet” Democratic Party, “Rukhaniyat” Party, Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, Communist Party of Kazakhstan, All-National Social Democratic Party and “Azat” Democratic Party of Kazakhstan.

To further enhance the role of political parties in line with the OSCE commitments, corresponding amendments were introduced to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2007. The details of these amendments will be spoken about within the framework of the third working group. Nevertheless I would like to note that as a result of these introductions to the Fundamental Law of the country the proportional system increased responsibility of the parties, which were assigned to play the main role in formation of the Parliament and the Government henceforth through appointment of the Prime Minister by parliamentary majority. Now voters, who voted for a party becoming the parliamentary majority, have the right to require accountability not only for its political activity, but also for activity of the Government and certain ministers as well. Besides, the amendments have ensured new opportunities for the voters as the subjects of political arena in the country. They will have to be knowledgeable about politics and politicians, wish to participate in the political process and take rational decisions while voting for one or another party or a candidate.

However, the parliamentary elections in 2007 have revealed some shortcomings and the ODIHR recommended a number of changes to the existing legislation on political parties.

In 2009, to implement the ODIHR recommendations, as well as within the course of political modernization, which was launched as early as 2004, Kazakhstan made a number of important steps towards creating an open, balanced and democratic political system, including enhancing the role of political parties. The introduced changes have greatly contributed to liberalization of the law, simplification of procedures for registration of the parties, transparency and better regulation of steering committees’ activity on establishment of political parties.

At the current stage of party-building development in Kazakhstan, formation of a more mature and developed party system is one of the key areas of the political process. This objective was reflected in the Strategic Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020 approved last February. The strategy provides 'enhancing the role and responsibility of political parties'. In our opinion, the 2012 parliamentary elections, which we firmly believe will form the basis for building a brand new party system in Kazakhstan, must be the first step in this context.

Thank you for your kind attention.