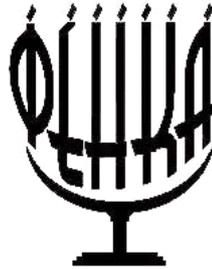


Federal Jewish  
National and Cultural  
Autonomy



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*OSCE SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON:  
FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF (9-10 July 2009 Hofburg, Vienna)*

## **Judaism in Russia**

1. Russian religious organizations operate in accordance with the Federal Law «On freedom of conscience and on religious associations».
2. Since 1991, in Russia takes place actively restoring of the religious life. The following factors contribute to this:
  - a return of religious property;
  - development of a system of religious education;
  - construction and restoration of new churches, mosques and synagogues;
  - organization of pilgrimages to holy places in the world.
3. In Russia there are two Jewish «umbrella» religious organizations. The most numerous - the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, headed by the religious Orthodox – Chassid of Habad Lyubavich. The next largest one is the Confederation of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Russia, uniting in its ranks orthodox and reformist communities. They are actively cooperating with Jewish non-religious organizations.
4. The work of Jewish religious organizations in Russia characterizes by the following indicators:
  - There are more than 230 Jewish communities in almost all regions of Russia.
  - There are more than 50 synagogues and community centers.
  - The construction and reconstruction of 11-synagogues and community centers. By early 2008, construction and repair works were completed in Volgograd, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, and Ufa.
  - Over the past year in the Jewish religious communities of Russia were distributed:
    - Over 1 million kilograms of matzos;
    - Over 200'000 items of the religious cult;
    - Over 1 million copies of various printed religious books;
  - There are 5 Jewish religious universities in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Nizhniy Novgorod.
  - 94 Jewish Sunday schools operate today in Russia. They allow the children not attending daily school, to get primary education in the Jewish tradition and culture on Sundays.
  - There are 29 Jewish religious day schools created and operate in Russia.
  - In the last 3 years significantly increased the amount of the charitable assistance of Jewish organizations in Russia to the poor members of the community. In particular:
    - Monthly distributed more than 150 000 kosher meals for free;
    - Only for the past year, distributed sets of clothing and food parcels for children from poor families - more than 5000 units.

- There are some Jewish Web sites in Russia. Over the past year, the total number of visitors amounted to 7'000'000 people.

5. There is no State anti-Semitism in Russia, as it was during the Soviet period. Jews are studying in universities; work in business and in public (governmental) service on the general grounds. The State authorities are actively cooperating with the Jewish organizations, assisting them in carrying out their activities. This concerns the restoration of temples, and the development of religious education, and more.

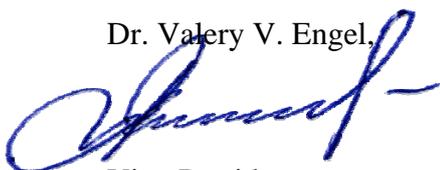
6. Nevertheless, there is the social (domestic) anti-Semitism in Russia. Jewish secular and religious organizations are actively cooperating with government authorities in combating this phenomenon. Recently increased the prosecutors work to identify the crimes at the national-religious.

7. In Russia there is a problem of education of law enforcement agencies to work with the crimes at the national-religious base. The policemen and prosecutors can not always distinguish the difference between domestic hooliganism and crimes motivated by racism and religious extremism. This problem is solved today with the participation of Russian and international human rights and Jewish community organizations.

8. Many religious people in Russia, especially Jews, reject the revision of the results of the Second World War in some former Soviet Union countries. Russian Jews concerned that the rising of the political anti-Semitism in these states following these trends. A lot of them have the families and relatives in these countries. We believe that the idea of shared responsibility of the USSR and Nazi Germany for the start of the Second World War is an attempt to rehabilitate the Nazism as an ideology that led to the deaths of 6 million European Jews. We see that after the start of the process of the rehabilitation of Nazism in some former Soviet Union countries, a number of anti-Semitic acts there are growing. For example, some streets in Kiev and the other Ukrainian cities bear the names of the murderers of Jews during the Second World War. In fact, these states represented by their officials justified the Nazi criminals. We believe that doing so, they assume at least moral responsibility for the consequences of war, especially for the Holocaust.

9. We can conclude the active cooperation between the major religions in Russia. The Inter-religious Council of Russia operates for a many years in RF. This body has successfully dealt with the issues of inter-religious interaction.

Dr. Valery V. Engel,



Vice-President.