



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU statement on the law on peaceful assembly and the law on religious freedom in Kyrgyzstan

The European Union notes with concern the approval of the amended law on peaceful assemblies by the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, as reported by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek on 16 June 2008. The new law contains several provisions which are not in line with OSCE standards and commitments, in particular the requirement to obtain advance permission to hold any kind of peaceful assembly.

For this reason, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek suggested to the speaker of the parliament that the parliament invite ODIHR to provide an expert opinion on the draft law. The Centre received an official request on 2 June and ODIHR planned to review the law by 30 June. The European Union is therefore surprised to learn that the law has already been approved without waiting for ODIHR's assessment. These recommendations should be considered in the further process of amending the law.

The EU would also like to draw attention to the law on freedom of religion and religious organisations, which the parliamentary committee for constitutional legislation, state order, rule of law and human rights passed recently. We urge Kyrgyz lawmakers to refrain from the premature adoption of the draft law as it stands, as it would seriously limit religious freedom in the Kyrgyz Republic and, in particular, the activities of smaller religious communities, which have contributed to Kyrgyz society for decades. We encourage the Kyrgyz authorities in this instance as well to seek advice regarding compliance with the relevant OSCE commitments from expert bodies

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such as the ODIHR's Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief and to take their recommendations into account in the further legislative process.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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