

**Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2008 Working Session 12:  
Freedom of Religion or belief (7 October 2008)**

**Statement by the Slovak Delegation  
In exercise of its Right of Reply**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow us to present correct and more complex information on registration of religion groups in the Slovak Republic. Contrary to the information presented by the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, it is the Article 7 of the Constitution that places international covenants on human rights before state law.

Then, we would like to underline that the Slovak Constitution itself provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contribute to free practice of religion regardless of status, whether registered religious group or not.

Registration of religious groups is not required in the Slovak Republic. Unregistered religious groups are able to function. The Ministry of Culture responsible for registration process cannot intervene in the internal affairs of religious groups and does not direct their activities.

Secondly, the law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors. That is also why the religious registration law was established. However there were more good reasons for doing so. One of the most important reason was also to advantage religious groups with a wider package of rights, which are not generally accessible in other countries and allows them to receive governmental benefits, including subsidiaries for clergymen and office expenses; exempt from paying taxes and import customs fees; conduct legal marriage ceremonies; establish schools; access to public television broadcasting etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let us conclude with what has already been said also at this fore, which is that even committed to the same standards, different problems require different solutions also in the Slovak Republic.

I thank you for your attention!