

НАМОЯНДАГИИ ДОИМИИ
ҶУМҲУРИИ ТОҶИКИСТОН
ДАР НАЗДИ САҲА



PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
TAJIKISTAN
TO THE OSCE

**Statement of the Head of Delegation of Tajikistan
Ambassador Nuriddin Shamsov at the OSCE Permanent Council
Meeting № 757 on April 2, 2009**

*In Response to European Union and United States
Statements on Tajikistan Law on Freedom of Conscience
and Religious Associations*

Madam Chairperson,

Delegation of Tajikistan thanks the European Union's and the delegation of United States interest regarding the new Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations adopted recently. HE the President Emomali Rahmon signed the Law on March 25, 2009 and it will enter into force after official publication. Before adoption the draft Law was discussed actively with the OSCE Advisory Council on Freedom of Religion or Belief and representatives of all religious communities as well as many parts of proposed recommendations were accepted by Tajik lawmakers.

The Constitution of Tajikistan provides for freedom of religion and the Government respects this right in practice. The previous Law of Tajikistan on Religion and Religious Associations was established on December 1, 1994 and amended in 1977. Since that time Tajikistan has gone through crucial and substantial changes in the socio-political and social-economic life of the Country. Explaining the motivation for the Law, the Government of Tajikistan strongly believes that it is needed to consolidate civil society, address current challenges and combat religious radicalism and nihilism.

The new Law provides the right of individuals to choose religion and practice their religion of choice, affirms the equality of all faiths before the Law, non-interference of the State in religious community's activity, the right of religious communities to manage their own affairs and select their leadership and the rights of individuals and religious communities to conduct worship, teach religion and use religious literature.

The Law does not specifically declare that religious communities must have registration to be able to function.

Tajikistan, where Muslims represent 95 % of inhabitants based mostly on Hanafi Islamic tradition. Giving tribute to great role of Imomi A'zam in the history of Islam Tajikistan this year celebrates 1310 of his birth. My Government taking efforts to ensure religious tolerance and, is making efforts to deal respectfully with wide-range groups of religious minorities, such as Orthodox and Catholic Christians, Baptists, Seven-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lutherans, Korean protestants, Bahai's , Zoroastrians and Krishnaitis. In accordance with information provided by the Ministry of Culture, Christian missionaries from Western countries, Korea, India and elsewhere are present in Tajikistan and functioning freely.

Regarding the Jewish Community, I have to note that a new building of Synagogue has been recently donated by Tajikistan authorities to the city's Jewish congregation in the center of Dushanbe. As it was stated by local Rabbi, he and his community believe the new Synagogue is an improvement over the old one. The opening of one of the World modern Ismailit Cultural Centers in my capital is on the way also.

On March 30, 2009 the Government of Tajikistan organized round-table discussions on the new Law with representatives of relevant state institutions, religious organizations and leading mass-media. I assure you that the issue of religious conscience and freedom will remain on the agenda of open dialogue between my Government and it's partners, in particular the European Union and the OSCE.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.