



ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ ЕҚЫҰ ЖАНЫНДАҒЫ ТҰРАҚТЫ ӨКІЛДІГІ  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN TO THE OSCE

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**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of  
Kazakhstan to the OSCE, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov  
at the 736<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council meeting**  
23 October 2008

***In response to the EU and US  
delegations' statements***

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the delegations of France/EU and the United States for their thoughtful presentations over the most pressing issue – religion. For the last few years our European and American colleagues have learnt a lot about the related threats through personal experience.

That is why the last legislative initiative of a group of Kazakh parliamentarians corresponds with trends which we witness in France, the United States and other countries whether at legislative or practical level.

Though having no power and right to restrict the Parliament in its initiatives, my Ministry insisted on inviting the ODIHR experts and we are very much grateful for their contribution to the draft law “On amendments to some legislative acts on freedom of religion and religious associations”. Simultaneously, the developers of the draft invited religious and civil society activists to be stake-holders, a decisive part and parcel of the process.

The said shows that discussion over the draft law has been always transparent and open. The real details – not topics for slogans can be easily found by those who wish to.

Decision not to make public the related ODIHR review was taken jointly by Kazakh and ODIHR experts. The major and the only reason was that the both sides had agreed that the review had not taken into account specific legal norms and legal system of Kazakhstan in general.

A serious review requires detailed references and cross-checking. There have been additional exchanges of analytical assessments. It shows that a considerable number of comments in the review still need to be revised in view of their relevance.

I would like to note that this joint decision was not governed by our reluctance to be criticized but reasonable intention to provide additional opportunity for the ODIHR experts to do the job properly thus avoiding any doubts related to their findings.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that freedom of religion or belief is a key OSCE commitment. Inter-religious dialogue and religious pluralism is an area to which Kazakhstan attaches particular importance. As Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OSCE draws nearer we are determined to ensure that our legislation adequately reflects this approach, in order to fully live up to our OSCE commitments and international human rights standards.

These commitments and standards stipulate the priority of the rule of law for any association as well. Any law-abiding religious group can easily be registered without any obstacles and red-tape.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to draw attention of the participating States that peace and concord among more than hundred ethnic groups and forty religious congregations of Kazakhstan was ensured to a large extent by its responsible and efficient policy and peaceful dialogue.

I would also like to assure that Kazakhstan will continue its cooperation with the ODIHR and I'm pleased to inform that further consultations between ODIHR and Kazakhstan experts on the issue are scheduled for November 2008.

I thank you.