



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Draft Amendments to Kyrgyzstan's Broadcasting Law

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 15, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States shares the concern of the Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti, which he expressed in a May 13th press release on recent draft amendments to Kyrgyzstan's broadcasting law.

The amendments appear to undermine Kyrgyzstan's stated goal of developing an independent public service broadcaster by giving the President control over appointing the leadership and nominating the board of the National Television and Radio Company of Kyrgyzstan. We find it particularly disappointing that these amendments were adopted by Parliament without consultations with media experts and without widespread public comment and debate.

This recent development is especially regrettable in light of the creation in Kyrgyzstan of the first independent media self-regulatory body in Central Asia, which we praised in our response to Ambassador Haraszti's report to the Permanent Council in March.

The United States encourages the Government to take advantage of the resources and experience of the Representative on Freedom of the Media who could conduct an expert assessment of the proposed broadcasting law and assist in a revision of the amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.